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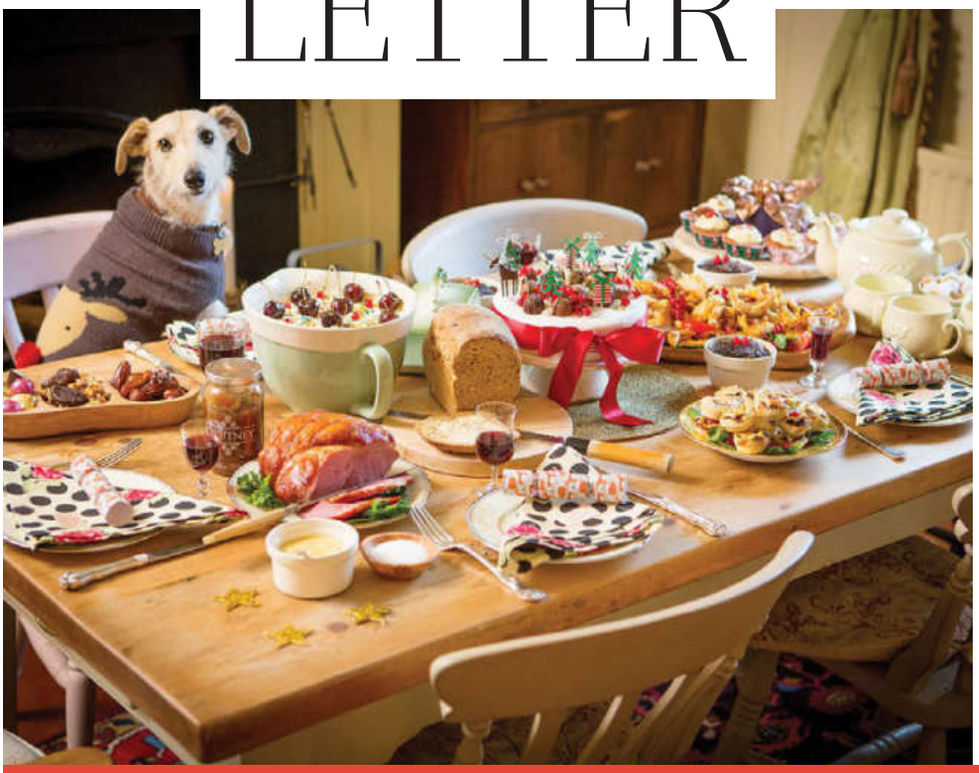
EDITOR'S LETTER



Home, sweet ***HOME***
Make sure your Christmas table is brimming with vintage charm with the help of Aga tableware and glorious Audrey napkins at Betty Twyford, **01568 611 124, bettytwyford.com**

What does Christmas mean to you? Beyond the sparkle, giftwrap and trolley dashes for last minute groceries, we can take some time to review how 2015 has unfolded and consider our plans for the new year. Does your home reflect the person you are becoming? Can you put 'Enjoy my home as it is' on your to-do list and resolve to take life more lightly? I certainly hope so. Whether you're refreshing the guest bedroom (p79) or looking for some gift ideas (p73), do make it easy on yourself. We've chosen some lovely homes to inspire you from (p22) and there's also a special Christmas supplement to inspire you. Season's greetings!

Susan Dickerson
EDITOR

This month Period Ideas has been **TRYING** *new recipes from marbled cakes to smoothies;* **BATTLING** *coughs and colds with blackcurrant Lemsip;* **MEETING** *the great and the good at trade shows;* **WATCHING** *badgers at twilight;* **REVIEWING** *last year's decorations and* **SHOPPING** *for more;* **PLANNING** *adventures for next year.*

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Etruscan Bath - 3 sizes available. Image supplied by Little Greene.

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Pay just £6 for your first three issues of *Period Ideas* with free delivery direct to your door. Classic inspiration for your home and garden all year long.

DECEMBER'S ESSENTIAL SHOPPING LIST

HOME STYLE

Keep up to date with the latest designs and happenings this month

DECK THE HALLS

It's time to dust off your decorations as Christmas has officially arrived. This attractive mini-wreath is the perfect piece to adorn your door. Priced at £10 from Marks & Spencer.
0333 014 8000, marksandspencer.com

HANGING OUT

Create a winter wonderland in your abode with crisp white and silver decorations from George Home. The baubles, priced from £1, are ideal for an icy colour palette.
0800 952 3003, direct.asda.com

STARRY EYED

Bring a festive feeling indoors with this star cluster from Sainsbury's, priced at £8. ***0800 636 262, sainsburys.com***

CHRISTMAS TWEETS

Catching sight of a robin redbreast is a sure sign of winter, and you can welcome our feathered friends with a robin snow globe from Monsoon which includes faux snowflakes.
020 3372 3052, monsoon.co.uk

TREE TOP

This December, depart from the red and green décor duo with Tesco's Vienna sparkle tree, which costs £50. Standing 6.5ft tall, it's sure to add a sophisticated edge to your scheme. **0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct**

FESTIVE FEASTING

Beyond the tinsel, lights and piles of presents, the main event this season is Christmas dinner. Make the most of your mouth-watering menu with Amara's gorgeous selection of gold and blue tableware.
0800 587 7645, amara.com

LIGHTEN UP

Embrace a Scandi scheme with stag-inspired pieces, such as this white antler chandelier from The French Bedroom Company. Great with exposed, rugged textures or luxe faux furs, it costs £429.
01444 415 430, frenchbedroomcompany.com

OH DEER

Add some animal magic to a rustic look, with a stylish wooden reindeer decoration from Homesense. Priced at £12.
01923 473 561, homesense.com

DIARY DATE

Don't miss the spectacular show of light, art and design at the National Trust property, Waddesdon Manor. In its final year of collaboration with designer Bruce Munro, it's set to impress, and there's also a Christmas Fair taking place throughout the festive break. Find out more on page 57, call ***01296 653 226****, or visit* ***waddesdon.org.uk***

WINTER WARMER

Fill your home with cosy delights by sinking into BHS's Rosie two-seater sofa, priced at £929, or wrap up in the Luxury supersoft fur throw, which costs £100. **0344 411 6000, bhs.co.uk**

Decorating with...

PEACOCK HUES

Celebrate the glamour and glitz of the festive season with a new take on opulent living

Edited by **JENNA GREGORY**

Gold glitter feathers and baubles, from £2, part of the Deco Grand Collection at Marks & Spencer. **0333 014 8555, marksandspencer.com**

Interiors with midnight shades, cobalt blues and peacock hues have come to the fore. This sophisticated scheme is elegant and refined, and the perfect backdrop for the festive season. Forget the adage 'blue and green should never be seen' and try 'green and blue, I love you'! Comprising shades of navy, vivid turquoise and teal, this rich wintry colour palette provides interiors with an air of indulgence and grandeur as well as creating a cosy and intimate space, ideal for hosting festive dinner parties around a candlelit table.

As we move closer to 2020, it's interesting to see designers rediscovering the 1920s and 1930s and listen to historians drawing parallels between the interwar era and today's world. Our love affair with period dramas, from *Poldark* to *Downton Abbey*, proves that looking to the past is a huge part of the British psyche. Inspired by the glam Art Deco era and Twenties luxury, designers have brought back golds paired with dark hues. Perhaps as we bring different colours into our homes we can also understand and integrate different aspects of our cultural heritage.

Our Georgian and Victorian ancestors loved rich, deep colours so they would approve of our fascination with the colours of the peacock – green and blue with shimmering flecks of gold, yellows, browns and purples in his tail feathers. Be inspired by these tones to decorate your abode to make this Christmas a dramatic and magical event.

These rich blues and greens are ideal for a dining room to promote a sense of occasion. You can also bring them into the living room but remember that these intense colours may be a shock if you were brought up on magnolia and off-white. If you've got a smaller room get the look by updating cushions, window dressings or add peacock accessories and feathers to your Christmas tree to avoid feeling overwhelmed. This is a grown-up look that can provide enchantment without being overly feminine. Gold flashes will add a feeling of warmth and a shimmer. But don't go over the top with sparkling accessories – aim to bring understated luxury to your home so it is elegant and comfortable.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

Catharine Denham, Head of Design – Homewares, BHS shares her advice for a gorgeous winter home

"The key to a luxurious Christmas look lies in combining rich, deep colours with an extravagant mix of soft furnishings in faux furs and velvets. Stylish statement lighting, such as candelabras and chandeliers, can help create an opulent feel. Lights with dimmer switches will allow you to easily control the level of light and the mood of the room. Don't be afraid to mix silver and gold, especially in brushed tones with added sparkles. To complete the look light plenty of candles, with tea light holders, to create a warming winter glow."

Scissors dining table, £599; Castillo silver set of two dining chairs, £250; bell jar with white glitter house £15; decorations from £2.50; large glass candelabra, £100; faux sheepskin hide, £35; silver tealight holder, £6; faux sheepskin quad rug, £140, all from BHS, **0344 411 6000, bhs.co.uk**

Swatch WATCH

Create strong visual contrasts of deep, rich teal and navy with flashes of gold
01524 852 371, lakelandpaints.com

- *Azure*
- *Teal*
- *Verdigris*
- *Gualala*
- *Flax*

DECO *rules*

We share our expert advice for decorating your home at Christmas

- Pick decorations that you think are beautiful and that you'll love all year round. Remember that your home should be enhanced by your decorations, not overwhelmed by them.
- Use gold and silver spray paint to add shimmer to old ornaments and objects, like candlesticks, twigs, dried fruit and foliage.
- Stylists are fascinated by the Art Deco golden pineapple at the moment, so why not spray-paint real pineapples and use them as the base for candles to make a striking statement on your dining table?
- For a luxe look dress tables with ornate candelabras. But be careful with lots of candles as they can become a potential hazard if dinner guests get a little too merry!
- Don't forget your hall. Drape foliage through the staircase and continue the theme in rooms which can't house a tree. A well-dressed hall makes a big impact on visitors too.

Betty armchair in olive matt velvet, £460, **0345 400 2222, sofa.com**

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Nordman fir tree, from £19.99, indoor LED string lights, from £12.99, Wyevale Garden Centres. **0344 272 3000, wyevalegardencentres.co.uk**

Site to see

You don't have to compromise on quality or price with this month's website. At Annabel James, the philosophy is that luxury gifts needn't cost a fortune. You can spoil the gardener in your life with everything from tool to trays and beehouses. ***annabeljames.co.uk***

Bloom of the month POINSETTIA

This festive favourite is a lovely way of adding colour to your table. The poinsettia comes from Central America and is named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first US ambassador to Mexico, who was a keen botantist. It is also known as the Christmas Star and the Christmas Flower, and the Aztecs believed it symbolised purity.

If you've ever wondered what makes this plant turn red, you're not alone. Its leaves respond to levels of light and a lack of light turns the leaves from green to red. Look after your poinsettia by making sure it has enough light and water and is at a comfortable temperature. When in full bloom the plant is happiest in semi-cool humid locations in bright, indirect light with plenty of moisture, so we can see why it can take some effort to nurture in the British climate.

Green shoots

Get prepared for the gardening year ahead with the help of the Royal Horticultural Society

If the thought of braving the shops for Christmas shopping doesn't appeal, then why not browse the RHS website from the comfort of your own home? There are some charming diaries and calendars available as well as cards and decorations. If you've ever fancied hanging a mini-greenhouse on your tree, then you know where to come to give yourself a treat.

01483 211 320, rhsshop.co.uk

Seasonal shopping Garden Journal

The latest news, inspirational ideas and expert advice for your great outdoors

NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh is the place to be for a stunning light show this season.

The award-winning Botanic Lights are returning from 29th October to 22nd November. Follow a new trail, which will lead you through the colours of the seasons, using state-of-the-art technology, projections and lasers to highlight the garden's magnificent trees and landscape. You can savour the majesty of autumn's reds and golds, an abundance of dazzling winter whites, spring's fresh yellows and greens or summer's vibrant hues. What will your favourite season be on a cold winter's night?

For tickets and more details, visit **rbge.org.uk**

Holiday at home

Enjoy walking in beautiful grounds and get into the Christmas spirit by visiting your local National Trust property this season. Look out for farmers' markets, fairs and special events nationwide. You're sure to gain some more insights into the past, as well as picking up some ideas for decorating your own home and some presents for friends and family at the gift shop. Find out more at **nationaltrust.org.uk**

RETAIL THERAPY

Do the Christmas shopping for the gardeners in your life in one fell swoop thanks to Wyevale Garden Centres

TREE TIME
Never miss a chance to indulge with the help of this charming timepiece, £29.99.

PICTURE THIS
Keep a special memory safe in a red fretwork frame, £12.99.

SHINE ON
Brighten up a winter's day with a black and bronze hurricane lantern, £8.99.

FIGURE IT OUT
Add a cunning feature to your hallway with a sitting fox, £29.99.

PULL THE OTHER ONE
Christmas dinner will go off with a bang with these fab crackers, £29.99.

All items available from Wyevale Garden Centres, call 0344 272 3000 or visit wyevalegardencentres.co.uk to discover more.

BRANCHING *Out*

Editor of Grow Your Own magazine, Claire Munnings, shares her trade secrets on planting garlic bulbs this month

For more growing tips and ideas, pick up the next issue of GYO on sale 30th October, and get free cabbage seeds

EXPERT ADVICE

This year seems to have disappeared in the blink of an eye for me. But, although the end of the year is drawing closer, the cyclical nature of gardening means there's plenty to look forward to and plan for. Even in the quieter periods of winter, your plot can be demanding – hardy root vegetables can be harvested, robust brassicas will need protecting from hungry pigeons and fruit trees and bushes are awaiting an annual trim.

One of my key jobs this month is planting garlic bulbs. It is said that garlic should be planted on the shortest day of the year and harvested on the longest and, while you can sometimes get away with starting as late as February, I've always found my harvests are better if I put them in the ground in late December. This is because garlic needs a period of cold in order to form split cloves, rather than one small bulb. While the little bulbs produced from late plantings are perfectly edible and full of the distinctive flavour, their size can be disappointing if you were expecting a much bigger harvest.

Garlic to grow should be bought from a reputable supplier – you can't just plant shop-bought types as the chances are they are used to different growing conditions and won't thrive in our climate. Break the supplied bulbs into individual cloves and place these in the ground just below the soil surface, 15cm apart, in rows 30cm apart.

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GARDEN GOSSIP
Sarah Raven

The queen bee of the British gardening scene shares her winning ways with Christmas crops and has a fantastic saving for you too

It's good to plan a smattering of home-grown crops to have with your meals over Christmas and if you get started now, there's still time. Pea tips seem surprisingly oblivious to the time of year, and will germinate perfectly happily this month, even though it feels life is a challenge for most things living outside.

If you have a sunny window-ledge, a porch, cold frame or greenhouse, sow yourself a couple of crates of special pea tip varieties such as Serge or select any of the mangetouts or sugarsnap types. These are quick growing and prolific at any time of year. Sown now, into 15cm depth of moist compost, they'll germinate in a couple of weeks with a bit of warmth to help them along the way and will be ready to harvest once they're 15cm tall in another couple of weeks time. Just pinch out the top of each plant and eat them, water them well after harvest to encourage regrowth and you can enjoy another harvest two weeks later.

I use pea tips scattered over warming risottos at this time of year, adding them right at the end so they get no cooking. Then they remain springy, crunchy and delicious, either roughly chopped or added whole. They're also excellent in salad.

Radishes are another good home-grown treat to add to your Christmas menus. I love them served as a canapé with an anchovy mayonnaise. Remove the outer leaves, but leave the foliage heart intact as a ready-made eating handle so that they can be dipped whole in the mayo and eaten in one bite. For the anchovy mayonnaise, put one whole egg and one egg yolk in a food processor or bowl and mix them with one garlic, six anchovy fillets, ½ teaspoon English mustard powder, salt and pepper. When the mixture is smooth, add 275ml sunflower oil (or one part olive oil to two parts sunflower oil) in a stream while blending continuously, until the oil emulsifies and makes a thick and smooth mayonnaise. Finally, stir in two tablespoons of lemon juice (to taste).

Go for a few microgreens now, too, sowing a pack of beetroot seeds into shallow compost or just a moistened triple layer of paper towel. You can then eat the sprouted seeds as they emerge, or allow them to grow on for a couple of weeks and slice off all the baby leaves. I love eating beetroot like this and it's hugely nutritious. Also try mini kale seedlings, sown, grown and eaten in the same way. I find the whole idea of microgreens slightly tricky and wasteful at other times of year, but at Christmas we're all due something exceptional and it's all the better if it's marvellously good for you, like these!

Sarah Raven has been running cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at her East Sussex farm since 1999 and has presented on BBC Gardeners World. She also has her own website, where you can purchase flowers, seeds, kits and view a full list of courses. ***sarahraven.com***

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Period Ideas readers can enjoy free P&P on any order from Sarah Raven until December 31st 2015, using the code **PD15DEC**. To make a purchase, call **0345 092 0283** or visit **sarahraven.com.** Offer is subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount. For full terms and conditions, visit **sarahraven.com/terms-and-conditions**

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- Butter for greasing
- 65g dark chocolate, broken into pieces
- 40g butter, diced
- 2 medium eggs
- 50g caster sugar
- 40g plain flour
- 2 teaspoons cocoa
- 100g raspberries, plus a few extra to decorate

For the sauce

- 100g dark chocolate, broken into pieces
- 25g caster sugar
- 125ml milk
- Large pinch of ground cinnamon
- Vanilla essence

Great British Food's Natasha Lovell-Smith says...

"Fresh raspberries are the perfect match for the rich chocolate in these little puds."

Recipe courtesy of Seasonal Berries, **seasonalberries.co.uk**

3 OF THE BEST... CHEESE KNIFE SETS

Enjoy your final course in style with these essential Christmas meal tools

MAKE THE CUT
Mixed metallics cheese knife set, £32, Oliver Bonas. **020 8974 0110, oliverbonas.com**

BITE TO EAT
Ornate cheese set, £18.50, Marks & Spencer. **0333 014 8000, marksandspencer.com**

PERFECT SLICE
Set of three feathered cheese knives, £3, Laura Ashley. **03332 008 009, lauraashley.com**

Baked raspberry and chocolate puddings with rich dark chocolate sauce

1 Brush the inside of four individual Yorkshire pudding tins or foil dishes (7.5cm diameter, 2.5cm deep) with butter, then line the bases with a circle of non-stick baking paper. Add the chocolate and butter to a small pan and heat gently, stirring until both have melted, then take off the heat.

2 Add the eggs and sugar to a bowl and whisk for 1-2 minutes until frothy. Gradually whisk in the melted chocolate and butter mix, then the flour and cocoa until smooth.

3 Divide the mixture between the buttered tins and scatter the berries on top. Chill for at least 1-2 hours.

4 Add all the sauce ingredients to a small pan and heat very gently, stirring until smooth, then remove from the heat. Cool and cover, then transfer it to the fridge.

5 When ready to serve, preheat the oven to 180°C (gas mark 4). Put the puddings onto a baking sheet and cook for 10 minutes or until just set in the centre. Remove from the oven, leave to cool for a minute or two, then loosen and remove from the tins. Peel away the lining paper and transfer to the serving dishes. Decorate with extra raspberries. Warm the sauce through, and drizzle over the puddings.

WHAT TO DO WITH... *Clementines*

December is the perfect time to get the Christmas cooking underway and clementines are a crucial ingredient in any festive fare. This succulent fruit is bursting with sweet citrus juice, while its vibrant orange hue is ideal for displaying at Yuletide feasts, or stuffed into the end of a stocking. As a variety of mandarin, it can help to relieve digestive troubles, improve cardiovascular health and strengthen the immune system, as well as containing enriching nutrients which encourage strong bones and support muscle relaxation. This fruity treat is delicious when baked into a sponge cake, garnished over vegetables and salad, or as a sweet and healthy snack.

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THE SASH WINDOW WORKSHOP

Period Ideas celebrates the best in British interiors

If you live in a period property, you'll know that the windows bring great character to your home. It can be easy to overlook potential problems, such as the subtle signs of rot, flaking paint or a chilly draught, particularly with older features. Thankfully, the Sash Window Workshop specialises in addressing these issues and provides a wealth of easy solutions which may prevent you from having to replace an entire window. With regular maintenance and some expert help, you can give your period timber windows a new lease of life.

The Sash Window Workshop is the premier manufacturer and installer of traditional timber sash and casement windows in London and the south of England. Founded in 1994, the company has over 20 years' experience repairing and upgrading timber windows for period properties, offering a range of window refurbishment and upgrading services. Its craftsmen understand that your home's windows are a vital component of its beauty, and are committed to maintaining and improving them. With this in mind, the company offers maintenance and adjustment as part of its draught sealing service, which aims to bring old timber windows into the 21st century, without compromising on character. It also provides a redecorating service with the London Window Painting Company, and complete window re-glazing using its unique Bi-Glass system, helping to improve the appearance and function of older homes.

Having worked on a variety of architectural styles, including Georgian, Edwardian and Victorian homes, the company can tackle almost any window-related problem. Richard Dollar from the Sash Window Workshop says, "The gaps around a typical single sash window can add up to the equivalent of six square inches. Without draught sealing, draughts, dust, dirt and noise all flood into your home and heat rushes out, leaving you feeling uncomfortable, as well as costing you money.

"At the Sash Window Workshop, we will always recommend the most appropriate product for your individual needs. Our refurbishment products are excellent quality and value, but we will only recommend them if we believe they represent a good long term investment. If your windows or doors are beyond repair, we will always recommend partial or full replacement."

The firm also manufactures and installs bespoke timber windows which have been hand-crafted in its Berkshire workshop. Its craftsmen can replicate any design or pattern to meet a customer's requirements, and meet the needs of listed buildings and conservation areas if necessary.

At the Sash Window Workshop, we know the importance of offering high quality products and services

UNIQUE CHARM

NATURAL

Josephine Ryan lives out her country Christmas dream by

The bay window makes the most convenient spot for the Christmas tree. The antique Swedish chairs and French side table are all from the home owner's shop, showing she often takes her work home

Josephine Ryan is an antiques dealer, author and stylist and lives with her children Cahal and Uma Rose

BEAUTY

bringing the outside into her Victorian villa in the capital

Words **MAGGIE COLVIN/NARRATIVES** *Photography* **ROBERT SANDERSON/NARRATIVES**

Above The off-white suede sofa was especially made to a George Smith design with a matching stool which converts into a single bed. The 1920s wing chairs are from Josephine Ryan's antique shop

There is nothing artificial about any of Josephine Ryan's Christmas decorations. She is as adamant about hating silk flowers and fake fir garlands as she is passionate about picking fresh mistletoe and berries from hedgerows and laying her Christmas table with old linen and antique silver. "I like to introduce colour in a natural way. For instance, each place setting is decorated with a silver bowl of cranberries with a tea-light stuck in the middle," she says.

Josephine's style is starkly defined by her likes and dislikes, particularly that of French and Swedish interiors – as with her take on Christmas decorating. She likes plain natural fabrics such as linen and silk, but not too much pattern or chintz. "I prefer aluminium antique zinc flower buckets or glass vases to plain white china. I prefer a real fur throw to a cushion any day. Fur is comfortable and lush. When I was young, I was an ardent vegetarian but now I am older, I am less emphatic. But I still consider myself to be a purist, but what is a purist? We all have different definitions. I prefer a pared-back Scandinavian look, and a bit of faded French grandeur, but nothing too twee. But some people might consider my house cluttered. We all have our own opinions," she says.

Christmas for Josephine is all about entertaining family and friends and everybody potters around in their dressing gowns if they feel like it. Christmas morning is spent chatting, playing carols, children opening presents, while the grown-ups enjoy champagne and smoked salmon blinis for breakfast. Later on, everyone enjoys playing board games and tucking into chocolate rugulas from Baker & Spice.

These family moments and relationships are important to Josephine. Her family gave her a love of antiques and a passion for buying unique items from around the world. "I was brought up in Ireland and my parents were both avid collectors so I was bound to follow their lead. A love of antiques is in my DNA," she says. Josephine, who owns her own antique shop in London, traces her love of rustic pieces

Above The original floor tiles in the hall were replaced by white limestone from World's End Tiles. The walls are painted in Westminster by Sanderson

Far left The kitchen revolves around a large French range by Falcon and the old butcher's block is a great place for carving the turkey

I love a touch of frivolity, especially at Christmas, which for me is the time to make everything look really beautiful

to her childhood. "I grew up with antique pieces all around me so I grew to love that distressed, battered look of simple rustic furniture used by peasants and farm workers in ages gone past. My friends say I live in another century," she laughs with a glint in her eye.

HUNTER GATHERER

If you are trying to track down something like her Edwardian fruit picker ladder at a country antiques fair, be warned if Josephine is on the hunt. The chances are she will have got there first because she already spotted its potential to hang her Christmas cards on. Though you could ask to buy it from her via her antique shop!

Josephine bought her first antique in Portobello Road and paid for it in installments. "I always believe in buying something you like even if you can't afford it! You just have to have the imagination and staying power to believe that if you like something enough, then someone else will want to buy it from you in the future," she says.

Staying power was an obvious prerequisite to transforming her double-fronted Victorian villa without central heating, which Josephine bought 18 years ago. It was a challenge full of promise, which Josephine could not resist.

"It has country house portions, with lovely light, and almost square rooms. The house had been previously owned by a builder, so it was structurally sound, but he had

modernised too much. He'd replaced the beautiful Victorian sash windows with aluminium ones and had removed a lot of the original features, like the old fireplaces. And the bathrooms were cheap. I wanted to restore it all to its original period charm," she says.

Josephine remembers the early days of knocking down the walls between the kitchen and dining room when she was pregnant with her son. She restored the windows and fireplaces, laid new limestone tiles in the hall and removed a mish-mash of coloured carpets to paint the floorboards a bare white. The walls were then painted in different shades of classic French grey.

RESTORATION DRAMA

"In those days I would buy something for the house, run out of money and decide I needed to sell it! So the rooms were constantly being altered. My first batch of antique furniture sold out at the Newark Antiques Fair and instead of spending my profits sensibly to pay bills, I promptly bought a whole new lot of furniture," she admits. Now that Josephine has taken to writing books and styling other people's homes, the contents of her house have stabilised. "I have stopped buying new things," she says, "not that I ever bought anything much 'new' except lamps and candles from Ikea." Inevitably as her children have grown up, the house has grown up too. It is more established and moulded to her personality.

3 SHORTCUTS TO A SCANDI-STYLE CHRISTMAS

- To display Christmas cards, antique ladders make fun, effective stands like Josephine's, or hang them over rustic twine suspended from just two hooks in wall alcoves. Either way, rustic materials are key, go for lots of wood, pine cones and twigs – even if they are painted white.
- Try cutting off the lower branches from your Christmas tree for extra greenery to use in decorations and wreaths. Josephine displays the cut branches on top of high shelves.
- Use soft lighting from fairy lights and candles to create a charming glow. Place mirrored mats on tables below candles so they double the impact of candlelight and reflect sparkle for a gorgeous effect.

Right The walls in the bathroom were painted in a mix similar to Calamine by Farrow and Ball and the letters came from France. For a similar reproduction Victorian bath, try Victoria Plum

Period Ideas says

View more of Josephine's style with her antique collections, shop and blog at ***josephinerya ntiques.co.uk***

Below Josephine's idea of ultimate luxury for a bedroom is one without built-in cupboards. Instead she sacrificed a smaller bedroom to use as a dressing room

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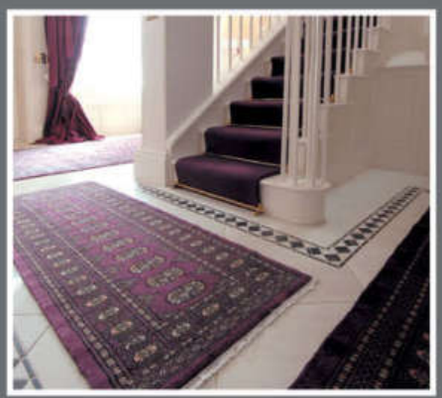

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Chic & cheerful

Treat yourself to something special for your home with the great

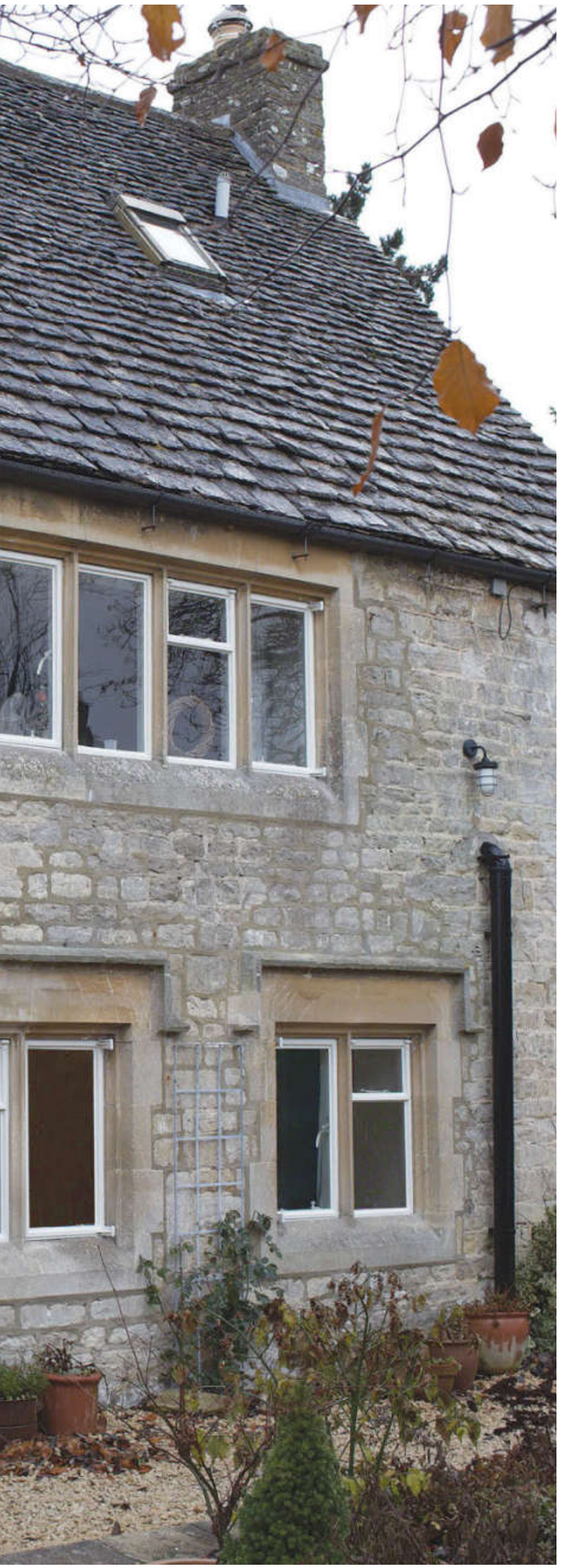
With the big day looming, December is when friends, family and shoppers everywhere reach festive fever pitch. Thankfully, Garden Trading has everything you need in a variety of sleek styles to suit your home and garden. Committed to providing functional products without compromising on design, it offers an array of trendy accessories and key pieces, perfect for any property.

Founded in 1994 by Jon Holloway, Garden Trading was inspired by a gap in the market for well-designed and practical household items that weren't too contemporary, but had a more classic feel. After recognising this, Jon harnessed his decade of experience developing products for leading retailers, including John Lewis, Next Interiors and Pottery Barn, and his love for modern and vintage designs, to create a company that helps make the home environment easy to use and maintain. It's essential for your home to keep up with the pace of modern life too, so the company strives to make high-quality products which will stand the test of time.

With this in mind, the firm's items reflect a clean-living approach, which is perfect for rural properties, as well as more contemporary town houses. In a rustic residence, vintage furniture, lighting and accessories combined with soothing tones, wood-burners and painted floorboards make a simple and elegant scheme, ideal for the functional and trendy look of Garden Trading's designs. Or, if your home is younger with a modern feel, there's a wealth of options available to complement a more minimalist layout. The staff at Garden Trading are passionate about making quality products with a long lifespan and strive to use responsibly sourced materials from within the EU where possible.

Style up your home this winter with Garden Trading's wonderful range of Christmas gifts

Ideal for styling up your home for winter, Garden Trading has a wonderful range of gifts and Christmas essentials for any interiors enthusiast. With everything from fireside tools to tide clocks, Cornbury votives and jars to biscuit boxes, cutters and mince pie trays, you can trust its on-time delivery service to help you out this season. With excellent customer service and a lovely range of products, you can rest-assured in the timeless quality of its original designs.



COTSWOLD CHARM

COUNTRY RETREAT

John and Carole Price combined classic colours to blend with the natural stone in their spacious new abode

Words **AMANDA HARLING/GAP INTERIORS**
Photography **NICK CARTER/GAP INTERIORS**

Left Carole has decorated with hints of cosy, seasonal shades, enjoying the inviting appeal of candlelight. Checked and tartan soft furnishings adorn the armchairs and sofas, adding a layer of warmth and comfort.

When it comes to hunting for your dream home, finding a property that fits all the criteria can be a challenging and tricky process. But for John and Carole Price, the search couldn't have been simpler, with their perfect property residing just beyond their doorstep. "Our new home is 150 yards up the hill from the cottage where we used to live," says Carole.

It had been on the market for 18 months and we hadn't even considered viewing it until one day walking back from the pub, we had a eureka moment and thought it might suit us. The owner had long since moved out and arranged for us to be given the keys, and within minutes we knew we'd found our new home."

After marrying ten years ago, John and Carole had moved into a cottage, which they had always felt was too small, especially following John's retirement. "Once John was home all day, we realised that more living space was required, as well as another bedroom or two for friends and family to stay – living in the Cotswolds makes us very popular!" says Carole, who was excited by the prospect of a roomier place.

DATE WITH HISTORY

Despite the obvious updates the house needed, the couple were enthusiastic about its potential, particularly its local historical significance. "We love old houses and part of the property dates back to 1654," says Carole. "The main road from Bath to Gloucester used to pass just outside, so this was one of five coaching inns in the village. It later became the village post office in the 1920s."

Eager to make the property their own, the couple moved in as soon as they had completion on the house purchase. The pair made do while the renovation took place, camping out in

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STYLE ADVICE

Simple pleasures

A palette of pure tones is great for a timeless look, which is easy to style according to seasonal trends. Decorate with off-whites, creams and greys, like Carole, and use accent furnishings to add some design detail or a splash of colour. When it comes to Christmas, elegant twinkling lights and candles are ideal for an understated look.

whatever room wasn't being worked on at the time. "We got used to shuffling our things around from one part of the house to another," laughs Carole.

As the daughter of a carpenter and joiner, Carole was more than used to sharing her space with sawdust and pots of paint. She had no desire to pursue interior design as a career, but as she grew up, she developed a keen interest in building and decorating. "I learnt a lot from my father; he was meticulous about workmanship and not one to cut corners. One of his pet hates was to see the pine or poor quality wood which the Victorians used for doors and furniture, stripped of paint. It opened my eyes to the magic of paint and I've been painting ever since," she recalls.

HEART OF THE HOME

Carole's insight into the world of building set her in good stead for project managing the refurbishment with John. "We knew there was a problem with damp that needed resolving and the ground floor was dug out so we could install underfloor heating. All the services were ripped out and replaced and we had the walls re-plastered after removing the existing Artex," says Carole. Some of the interior walls were exposed stone, but Carole preferred a brighter, open feel. "I find stone oppressive and dark – it makes me feel as though I'm living in a cave," she says, adding, "I think rooms that are full of reflected light much more comfortable."

In order to maximise the space in the house and represent the famous Cotswold stone in their interiors Carole chose a palette of pale creams and off-whites. "Even painting the window frames a lighter colour makes a huge difference to a room and creates a feeling of continuity," she says. Carole uses a stunning selection of cushions and throws to adjust the style of her rooms throughout the year, matching the seasonal changes. "It's easy when the scheme is neutral," she explains. "In the winter, I use warm colours in wool and in the summer I'll go for pale stripes or checked linens."

A limestone floor extends from the hall to the dining room and kitchen at the rear of the house, complementing the period setting, while the pale shade and smooth finish give the house the more contemporary look which Carole wanted. In the sitting room, the couple opted for a wooden floor, evoking a feeling of warmth and comfort.

Carole makes the most of her restrained home style throughout the festive season, and takes a less is more approach to decoration. "I prefer the simple look – especially where space is at a premium," she says. "Candlelight is attractive at any time of year and the Christmas tree is the finishing touch – it goes without saying that it's decorated in white and silver, with lights to match!"

Above Natural hues were used in the bathroom and bedrooms, creating a calm and relaxing feel. This allows Carole to inject hints of colour and personality, without any design clashes.

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This historic inn, a de Savary Property, has a comfortable and friendly style and offers high-quality gastro-inn style food. Head Chef Ben Kingdon changes his menus daily, with the coast and country reflected in equal measure, creating a unique and delightful tasting experience for guests. Now that the colder months are here, Ben enjoys creating a range of wintry dishes, making the most of local seasonal ingredients.

The Cary Arms offers panoramic views of the beautiful beaches in South Devon

Sheltered in its own pretty portion of the South Devon coast, the Cary Arms provides panoramic views and access to a range of undulating coastal paths along South Devon beaches or the local Dartmoor National Park, perfect for long, invigorating walks. Follow this with a Yon-Ka treatment in the spa room, which offers guests the chance for total relaxation and indulgence.

The new Winter Gastro Package is now available, including a two-day experience which allows guests to enjoy a diverse mix of quality cuisine, from the Cary's gastro inn fare, to the Michelin-starred Elephant – a two-storey restaurant overlooking Torquay's harbour, offering diners top-class food and service without the formalities.

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CLOSING DATE: 11th December 2015

RURAL IDYLL

Comfort & JOY

Liz Langley and Jonny Fuller's light and airy farmhouse is a superb setting for a family Christmas and New Year

Words **GAP INTERIORS/VIVIENNE AYERS** *Photography* **GAP INTERIORS/MARK NICHOLSON**

Christmas is my favourite time of year," says Liz Langley. "I get the trees on the first weekend of December and decorate as soon as I can. I love natural decorations so I go outside and get my foliage from the hedgerows and holly from the bushes and use it to make wreaths. I really enjoy being creative – I love the detail of it all."

The rural surroundings are perfect for gathering greenery and the idyllic setting first attracted Liz and Jonny to their farmhouse in Berkshire. "We loved its location and felt it was right for us all, plus it had space for people to stay," she says. "We completely fell in love with the house as we liked the way it rambled on. As the kitchen is at the heart of the house, it is very sociable. We wanted open fires, interesting rooms and character and it has those in abundance."

FAMILY FORTUNES

Liz and her partner Jonny Fuller, the director and co-founder of the software firm Centrix, live here with their four children, Toby, 16, George, 14, Harriet, 14, and Charlie, 12, and Bertie the golden doodle. The building dates from the 17th century, has an 18th century extension and later additions.

Major renovations were required, however. "Initially we were rather overwhelmed by it all, but we could imagine it working. We looked on it as a long-term project," says Liz. The family lived in the house for six months before work commenced so they could get a feel for how they wanted it to look.

First, the house was rewired and a new heating system put in. New floors were laid and the kitchen, which originally was two rooms, was knocked through and handmade units installed by a local carpenter. The table and chairs are from OKA and the soft fabrics are from Vanessa Arbuthnott, with flooring by Classical Flagstone. Liz maximised light in the room by painting the beams a pale shade (Hay by Farrow & Ball) and using neutral tones. The bathrooms were also replaced and the whole six-bedroomed house was completely redecorated.

Liz's main priority was for the property to be comfortable. "I wanted people to feel that they could put up their feet and read the paper. I didn't want the house to look too pristine. I used warm colours and linens – it's a classic look and very welcoming and comfortable. It'd describe it as a mix of country style with French influences."

In the dining room an elegant table setting is created with crisp white tablecloths and fresh flowers. Liz made the tablecloths and linen full-length undercloth in an Ian Sanderson fabric and also made her own curtains from a Romo fabric. The walls are painted in New White by Farrow & Ball and Liz bought some charming place name baubles from Sia to grace her table for parties.

The living areas are gorgeously snug and cosy. There's a garden room which has an oversized sofa and fur throws add to its sumptuous feel. The wicker chairs and driftwood

Below There's nothing like a warm farmhouse welcome when Liz and Jonny's guests arrive for Christmas! The greenery by the front door is a great way to bridge inside and out

We completely fell in love with the house as we liked the way it looked. Its rural location is amazing

5 SHORTCUTS TO ENGLISH CHARM

- Liz loves going to Highclere Castle (01635 253 210, highclerecastle.co.uk) near Newbury, the location of Downton Abbey. Stately homes can be a great place to gather ideas for your interiors.
- She is also inspired by the colours of nature when walking in Wallingford. Watership Down, the home of Richard Adam's first novel, is nearby and it is a beautiful area to explore
- Local market towns are a rich source of shopping ideas. Expect the unexpected! Roxtons (01488 682 885, roxtons.co.uk) in Hungerford sells everything from hunting and shooting items to clothing and gifts
- Be inspired by The Yew Tree Inn (01635 253 360, theyewtree.co.uk) at Highclere. It serves delightful cuisine and is decorated in a very appealing style for lovers of all things country
- Go on holiday at home. Try The Crab & Boar at Chieveley (01635 247 550, crabandboar.com) which is a cracking restaurant with rooms

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Left Liz gets ready for the Christmas countdown with her own version of an advent calendar on the mantelpiece. The kitchen diner is the place to be for tea and cake in front of a roaring fire after a brisk dog walk

mirror work well with French antiques and pieces from high-end shops such as Heal's.

Now that the work is complete, Liz and Jonny are delighted that they can enjoy it. "It's a house that works well when friends and family are here because it flows between different spaces. It really comes into its own at Christmas," says Liz.

"'Then, the children wake us, we light the fires, open our stockings and presents then have breakfast and champagne. Friends and family pop in for drinks during the day. Before we sit down for lunch, the children and I go through the house and light all the candles, which creates a very special atmosphere... just what Christmas should be."

INSTANT EXPERT

Be inspired by Liz's fusion of French and English pieces with this restored Louis table and chairs. Priced at £980 it's the most popular dining set by Unique Salvage Chic, which specialises in updating existing pieces. Receive 10% off by quoting Period Ideas and pre-order for Christmas deliveries by the end of November. **01379 672 937, uniquesalvagechic.co.uk**

PRINTS CHARMING

Be inspired by Liz's chic and comfortable style by working with patterns and a simple palette

Bring character to bedrooms and sitting rooms with patterns you love but don't over do it. Liz keeps her style clean and unfussy by focussing on one strong print and brings out its beauty with complementary colours or by matching hues perfectly in her paints and fabrics.

Right An elegant green fabric in the living room works beautifully with a fresh and vibrant scarlet. The scheme is light and charming

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Small is *beautiful*

How interiors expert Julia Murnighan and stylist Alex Longmore created a charming rental cottage

Words **NARRATIVES/CHARLOTTE COLVILLE** *Photography* **NARRATIVES/BRENT DARBY**

Left Alex and Charlie Mouse take a crisp morning stroll around Kingham. No walk is complete without a visit to the parish church's charming lychgate

Tucked away down a winding lane in the Cotswold village of Kingham on a December morning is a hidden gem. A charming 18th century cottage, blanketed in snow with a wreath on the door, fairy lights twinkling, with a Jack Russell terrier curled up in front of the fire, could be the front of a Christmas card.

This is home to Alex Longmore and her dog Charlie Mouse. Somehow it feels as if the duo could have been here forever, as every surface covered in Alex's homemade decorations, handpainted Christmas cards, and one-off works of art. "We haven't yet been here a year," Alex confides, "and sadly we don't even own it. I've been renting it since April."

When Julia Murnighan decided to rent out her cottage, she trusted her instincts and renovated and decorated the house in English country style with some French vintage and rustic Scandinavian thrown in. "Neutral seemed so impersonal," she says. "Besides, I didn't want just anybody to rent my beloved cottage, I was after the perfect tenant."

GREAT TIMING

Luckily for Julia, Alex was in the village viewing cottages the morning that Julia rang her agent to say her property would soon be ready. Julia was in her overalls, making finishing touches to the paintwork, dustsheets were everywhere and furniture was piled into the middle of the rooms to avoid wet paint. "The dream cottage wasn't looking particularly dreamy," recalls Julia, who owns The Old Pill Factory (theoldpillfactory.com), "but on a whim I said Alex could come and have a look."

Above Friends and family admire the simple handmade charm of Alex's decorations in her cottage. An eclectic mix of paintings add extra character

"I barely noticed the decorating chaos," recalls Alex Longmore, a fashion stylist. One look at the light-filled sitting room, with its inglenook fireplace, exposed stonework and original beams had her longing to see the rest. Her excitement grew as she discovered a perfect country kitchen in miniature, next door – with Shaker-style units, a butler's sink and scrubbed farmhouse table, and upstairs two cottage bedrooms snuggled under the eaves complete with wooden panelling and original mantelpieces.

To Julia's astonishment, Alex, five minutes after arriving, announced that this cottage was 'the one'. Julia recognised a fellow home lover, and was prepared to overlook the disarray and see the house's charm and the two sat down on the dust-sheeted sofa to discuss the cottage's history.

Julia had been attracted to Kingham, because it seemed the perfect rental location. It is a charming Cotswold village, set around a large village green, with two great pubs, a school, a village shop and a mainline station running regular trains to London. Alex, spends much of her time in London and had always longed for a bolt-hole for weekends and holidays.

When Julia had bought the cottage in 2008, its last overhaul had been in 1973 and its plumbing and electrics ran visibly around the walls. It had a melamine kitchen, vinyl floors, PVC windows and an avocado bathroom.

CREATIVE THINKING

During the months that followed, Julia set to work. After taking out the old kitchen and bathroom and removing jaded carpets and vinyl floor coverings throughout the house, she discovered clipboard flooring had been laid beneath. There were no voids in it which explained why the pipes and wires ran unhidden around the walls. "We had to be creative with the plumbing and electrics," Julia says. She installed a new boiler in the corner of the kitchen and ran its pipes up behind plasterboard to the bedrooms upstairs.

Unique cushions, throws and tapestries make Alex's home feel welcoming and creative

Above A red and white scheme is cosy and adds to the Christmas scheme. The cupboard and mirror belong to Alex. Julia is a great fan of Hungarian and Scandinavian striped fabrics which she sells in her shop

Julia then fitted tongue and groove panelling around the upstairs rooms and ran the piping behind, finally bringing it back down into the sitting room to meet a radiator situated there.

After that Julia had the spaces between the wooden beams lowered a fraction to incorporate the electrics so that the ugly pipes and wires were rendered invisible. She took out the 1970s flat panelled doors and replaced them with ledge and brace doors, and had timber framed windows installed, in keeping with the cottage's age.

KITCHEN CHIC

Julia's next task was putting in a new kitchen and she waited until the sales were on before hitting Homebase. She chose slate tiles which she installed herself and a Shaker-style cream kitchen, complete with all appliances "except a dishwasher which I convinced them to throw in for free!" The sitting room came next. Again Julia waited for a special offer before settling on engineered oak floorboards, which she laid herself. She painted the beams in pale cream to raise the ceiling height and had a period-style fireplace reinstated to bring the room back to its former glory.

Upstairs Julia went for a neutral space-saving bathroom, moving the bath from beneath the window to incorporate an overhead shower. The bedrooms, with their stooped ceilings, dormer windows and new tongue and groove panelling were already full of character, but Julia added a small original pine mantelpiece to the false chimney breast left over from the previous boiler, which embellishes the master bedroom perfectly.

The rest was merely cosmetic – the painting, decorating and furnishing stage, about the time that Alex first set foot inside the house, and fell in love with it. Its unique charm today is down to the skill and creativity of both owner and tenant. It's an eclectic mixture of original antique pieces from Julia's shop and Alex's lifetime passion for creating or collecting beautiful ornaments, works of art and accessories.

EXPERT ADVICE

The combination of Julia's gut instinct and Alex's flair for design really make the cottage a special place to be

"When renovating a period property that has been stripped of its original features, take time to research similar local properties to discover what is missing. You then have guidelines as to how to renovate your property to bring back its character and reflect its age. Likewise when choosing builders and craftsmen, make sure they have a good knowledge of period and local properties, as work on older homes requires different techniques from more modern homes. When decorating smaller properties use pale colours and mirrors to keep the space feeling light and airy. Also mirrors, glass and sparkly objects throw light around and add to the feeling of brightness. Keep large furniture neutral, so that you don't end up with conspicuous blocks of darkness," says Julia.

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Turn to page 136 or head to **periodideas.com** for your chance to win!

Christmas crockery

Win a classic set of kitchenware in time for holiday hosting, worth over £50 each!

With the party season approaching, you're likely to be preparing your house for guests, decorations and a wealth of festive feasting. But before you dive into the Christmas chaos, get roast-ready with Premier's OvenLove and Beech collections. These high-performance homewares come in an array of stylish and subtle tones, such as blue, grey, white and beige, perfect for creating a calmer kitchen space. Each piece delivers the look and feel of traditional stoneware, as well as great functionality. This latest range includes ramekins, several casserole dishes and attractive storage canisters, all with a desirable matt finish. There's a variety of pretty textiles available too, such as tea towels, oven gloves and aprons, while its trendy tableware includes placemats, mugs and lap trays.

This month, we've teamed up with Premier to offer 10 lucky readers the chance to win a bundle of items from this impressive range, which will include a casserole dish, a set of two ramekins, a set of four porcelain mugs, a set of four cork placemats and a set of three tea towels, worth over £50. Find out more about the range by calling **0141 579 2000** or visiting **premierhousewares.co.uk**

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This month, 11 lucky readers will win £45 worth of Heart & Home treats, comprised of two large jar candles, two small jar candles, a votive holder and votives. Visit **heartandhome.com** to find out more.

How to *ENTER*

Turn to page 136 or visit **periodideas.com** for your chance to win. **CLOSING DATE: 11th December 2015.**

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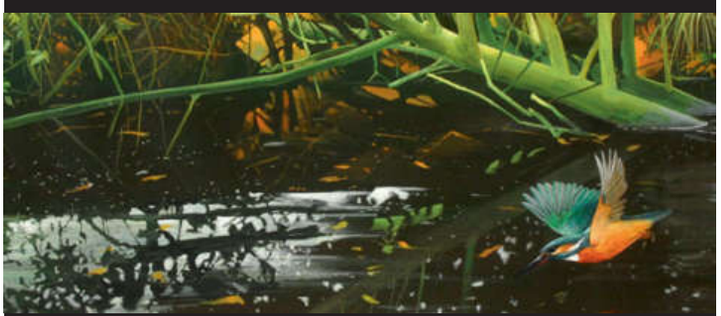

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Waddesdon Manor is a beautiful, 19th century property, which was far ahead of its time in terms of design, technology and art

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Jessica Panton discovers the National Trust's illuminating plans for Waddesdon Manor this winter

Photography **NTPL/STUART BEBB/MIKE FEAR/MARK PICKTHALL**

With Christmas creeping in earlier every year, it's easy to celebrate the annual festivities in the usual way. But alongside the nativity plays and fairs, you can visit a unique National Trust property rich in history, culture and contemporary art and design. Come to Waddesdon Manor to experience a spectacular light show and some dazzling interiors.

Located just outside Aylesbury, Waddesdon is not a typical English property. This late 19th century house was inspired by a French renaissance château. Its peaked turrets and grand neo-Gothic architecture are more reminiscent of Paris than the Home Counties. Built in 1877 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to display his fascinating art collection, you can admire 18th century French decorative furniture, stunning portraits and Dutch Old Master paintings, as well as a beautiful Victorian garden, renowned for its elaborate parterre and ornate aviary. Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1957, and is managed by the Rothschild Foundation. Today the estate is one of the Trust's most visited properties.

Although its enchanting architecture was inspired by ancient châteaux in the Loire, Waddesdon broke new ground. Just a decade after electricity was invented, it was one of the first houses of its era to install electric light. When Queen Victoria visited in 1890, she was reportedly so delighted by the innovation that she spent some time turning the lights on and off. "Light, and the control of light has always played an important role in our interiors," says Pippa Shirley, head of collections. "We have a magnificent collection of 18th and 19th century chandeliers as well as our specially designed picture lights which were the first in the country to use low-voltage bulbs."

Ingo Maurer's stunning *Porca Miseria* chandelier in situ

Bright ideas

Above Christmas at Waddesdon brings some dramatic decorations, incorporating light, texture and colour

Each room is decorated in a different theme surrounding the meaning of light

Waddesdon still pushes the boundaries by including contemporary collections alongside its period interiors, including Lord Rothschild's new commission of a bold chandelier by Munich-based designer, Ingo Maurer. The result is the chandelier *Porca Miseria*, a scintillating montage of broken porcelain, held as if in a frozen, mid-air explosion. "We've always believed that Waddesdon should reflect the interests of the Rothschild family," explains Pippa. "Lord Rothschild is genuinely interested in contemporary art, being a collector himself."

Waddesdon's annual art programme includes a two-month-long display of light in the house and grounds. "We wanted to build on our fascinating history," says Emily Roy, curator at the manor, who is co-ordinating Christmas in the house and the illuminating winter schedule. "It has always been a technologically advanced house and we wanted to explore light art as a subject. 2015 is the International Year of Light and Light Technology, and we are celebrating our history with the theme of lights and legends."

This is the second year of a similar theme and will include a new light show on the façade of the manor, *Light and Found*, designed by Patrick Woodruff Bassette, which runs every half hour after sunset. There are also large illuminated candlestick sculptures in front of the house, creating drama as visitors approach. "It was important to explore and enhance the landscape, so we introduced contemporary sculptures into the grounds, developing a trail of installations designed by Bruno Munro through the gardens, something which we hope will broaden the visitors' experience," says Emily.

Inside the house, each room is decorated in a different theme and includes references to legends surrounding the meaning and origins of light, such as ancient Greek myths and Scandinavian tales of the northern lights. Emily says the team was also inspired by religious traditions, such as the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah – the festival of light, as well as the magi following the star to Bethlehem in Matthew's Gospel. "As the International Year of Light is the UN's theme, we wanted to look at a broad range of nations, places and celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Divali, not just Christmas," she says.

Above *Eden Blooms*, from last year's show, creates an enchanting display of nature and technology working together

ART HISTORY

Waddesdon supports Trust New Art, a collaboration between Arts Council England and the National Trust which promotes contemporary arts and crafts in historic properties. The aim is to inspire artists and audiences, and encourage new ways of looking at the work and the world. For more information and tickets, call **01296 653 226** or visit **waddesdon.org.uk**

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HISTORY DOCUMENTED

Collectables

As 2015 draws to a close, Margaret Powling reads some antique diaries and asks why people chronicle their lives

In his published diaries, *Something Sensational to Read in the Train*, Gyles Brandreth, TV personality, former MP and government whip asks, "What is this compulsion to record one's own life?" He answers his own question by admitting that writing his made him feel "more alive, more aware of what is happening," which, I suppose, is as good a reason as any. His diary begins in 1959, when Gyles was just eleven, and ends at the dawn of the new millennium. These extracts are a keenly-observed account, not only of his life, but of the second half of the 20th century.

"A diary is seldom literature," said Sir Hugh Casson (1910-1999), a distinguished architect who, in 1976, was created President of the Royal Academy of Arts and was once described as 'Britain's foremost ambassador of the arts'. His illustrated diary, with watercolour sketches and witty cartoons, combined with details of the people he meets and the places he visits, is a delight. His account, and drawings from Wednesday 12th March 1980, are a fascinating insight into his life: "Brief whisk around Japanese Exhibition at V&A. As always excellent, not too big, well shown, exquisite pottery and witty toys. Back home to change for dinner with Prince and Princess Michael of Kent at Kensington Palace."

Although a diary is generally written without the intention of publication, some – especially political diaries such as those of Sir Henry 'Chips' Channon, Tony Benn and Alan Clark – were undoubtedly written for that very reason. James Boswell, Dr Johnson's biographer, freely admitted that he kept his journal with mortality in mind.

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) is perhaps the most well-known diarist today. First published in 1825, after the code in which they were written was cracked, his diaries, along with those of fellow diarist of the time, John Evelyn (1620–1706), are considered to be among the most important primary sources for the English Restoration period. Both 17th-century chronicles cast considerable light on the art, culture and politics of the time with their accounts of the deaths of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, and the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London.

EDWARDIAN INSIGHT

The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady, a facsimile of the naturalist Edith Holden's (1871-1920) diary for the year 1906, was published in 1977. With its sepia-tinted pages and detailed illustrations of flora and fauna, Edith's diary tapped into the nation's psyche and its readers longing for a return to a bygone era. It was *The Sunday Times* bestseller of the 1970s and remains at No. 4 in the overall bestseller lists of the last 40 years.

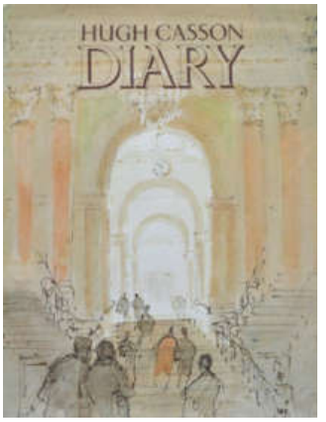
Another book published in 1979 prompted *The Daily Mail* headline, "Have they hit on another winner?" alluding to the success of *The Country Diary. Days on Sea, Lock and River* is a fishing diary compiled and illustrated by Muriel Foster between 1913 and 1928. Muriel, like Edith Holden, was a keen naturalist and her diary is a fascinating chronicle of where, when and with whom she fished, and the number of, and type of, fish caught. One illustration is of a determined woman in wet-weather gear, striding across the page in 1923, but we will never know for certain whether this is a self-portrait. I like to think it is.

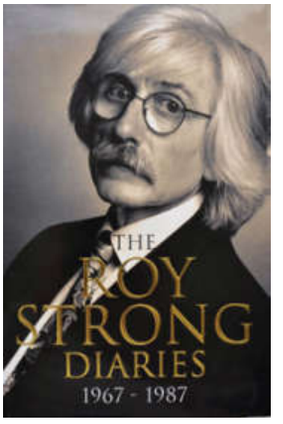
BOLD REMARKS

Once the Director of the National Portrait Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum, historian, broadcaster and garden expert Sir Roy Colin Strong's diaries are as entertaining as they are provocative. In them we meet not only members of the royal family but also the great and good of the day: David Hockney, Cecil Beaton, and Mrs (later Baronness) Thatcher. It is filled with wonderfully acerbic comments: 17th May 1977, describing a 'dull evening' at the Royal Academy Dinner: "Jonathan Miller forgot to toast the health of the Royal Academy... HRH Anne did a defensive speech, a fatal mistake, as she tried to shift her horsey image... Poor Mark Philips, HRH's husband, sat looking dim, his hair thinning." These, I might add, are some of Sir Roy's less-controversial remarks.

Left An illustration from *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady by* Edith Holden

Above The Victoria & Albert Museum, home of Lady Charlotte Schreiber's diary and her china collection





Margaret's Excellent Advice

Read accounts of the past at the V&A Museum and with library and online archives

Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1895) left her journals and valuable 18th century ceramics, acquired on her extensive travels, to the Victoria & Albert Museum. The collection can still be viewed today and is admired by china lovers world-wide. Other insightful accounts and original diaries can be read in the British Library's archives. But what makes these type of collectables so accessible is that many have been reproduced, printed and published worldwide and online. *The Roy Strong Diaries 1967-1987* is published by Phoenix Books and can be purchased at leading book shops.

Right Compilation of pages from the diaries of Edith Holden, Hugh Casson and Muriel Foster

DIARY DATES

● **Antiques for Everyone, Winter Fair, NEC Birmingham, 19th–22nd November**
You won't want to miss the largest art, antiques and interiors fair in the UK. The exhibition features more than 230 specialist dealers offering a huge variety of desirable, rare and quirky items at prices from £10 to £100,000. All pieces for sale are vetted by a team of experts so you can buy with complete confidence. Whether you are looking to add to your collection, shop for a unique gift or find inspiration for your interiors, you'll be sure to pick up the perfect piece.
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● **The Watch Sale, Fellows Auctioneers, 1st December**
A roll-call of famous makers is not an unusual sight to behold at Fellow's monthly watch sale, with over 400 watches from Audemars Piguet, Breguet and Rolex featuring alongside jeweller-watchmakers such as Cartier and Piaget. This auction draws buyers from all over the world bidding on vintage rarities, limited edition models, and modern timepieces, and is perfectly timed to bid for a special Christmas present.
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● **Newark Antiques & Collectors Fair, 3rd–4th December**
The world-renowned Newark fair is the largest event of its kind in Europe and features up to 2,500 stands offering a huge range of collectables and antiques. From chandeliers and rugs to sports memorabilia and paintings, there's something for every taste at this 84 acre treasure hunting ground, which attracts dealers and buyers from across the globe thanks to great transport links. As featured in the book *1000 Places to See Before You Die*, this event really does need to be seen to be believed. **01636 702 326, iacf.co.uk**

● **Christmas at Kew, Kew Gardens, 25th November–2nd January**
Queen Charlotte dressed one of the very first decorated Christmas trees in England in the 1790s in a room at Kew Palace. Kew will come alive this winter with seasonal illuminations lighting the gardens and palace after dark. Now in its third year, the Christmas display will this year feature a new one-mile winter-trail winding its way through the world-famous botanical gardens in a magical after-dark experience, focusing on the Christmas tree and Kew's special part in the history of traditional celebrations. For tickets, priced at £16 per adult, and for more information visit **kew.org/christmas** and **raymondgubbay.co.uk**

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Nina Campbell is one of our most respected and influential interior designers. After training with Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, she set up her own business, aged 20, and after 50 years in the trade, she's a living legend. Current projects include a large residence in China, a New York town house and a country house hotel overlooking Cheltenham race course. She has worked with the wallpaper suppliers Osborne & Little for 25 years and her latest collections with them and the furniture brand Oomph draw on her travels and family ties.

My favourite room is...
a room I saw years ago in the south of France. It was totally mirrored with a bath in the middle – a bathroom salon with armchairs scattered around – very Marie Antoinette. My bathroom isn't like this but it has French doors that open out to my bedroom.

The thing I like best about my house is...
coming home and opening the door. It's a tucked away house and when you walk into the lacquered hall you see a pair of mirrors which are at an angle to reflect the view of the back garden. It's an incredibly pleasing use of light and space.

The place I love most in Britain is...
wherever I am at the time. I am very much in the present and feel terribly lucky and happy to be where I am. I have places I love to visit all over the world but I don't think it's healthy to have a favourite place.

When I'm decorating a room I always...
think about its relationship to the house. What's the adjoining room? Where does the light come from? Do you want a neutral room or will it be full of art? When designing for others it depends on what someone has and what their passions are; this determines whether you start with a blank canvas or design around existing pieces.

My inspiration comes from...
walking along the street, travelling, reading, visiting museums, walking past a shop and seeing a piece that inspires a whole scheme.

We catch up with the legendary designer, Nina Campbell, and discover her interior inspiration

I rather hate trends. You need to feel comfortable in your environment

The worst design disaster I've had was...
I'm sure I have one but it's gone out of my head! If you order fabric and you're in a hurry, you try to take shortcuts, people don't see swatches and then cover a sofa in completely the wrong fabric! You have got to be meticulous!

If I could make over anyone's home it would be...
Ian Hislop's. I think he's the funniest man in the world, so I would love to work with him and see what his house is like. I wonder if it's full of all his hilarious press cuttings?

The current interiors trend I love most is...
colours coming back. I like the fact that people are being braver with their interiors. The hotel interior design is ending, no longer do rooms look like show homes, everyone is starting to experiment with colour and texture.

I think the next interiors trend will be...
no trend. I rather hate trends. You need to feel comfortable in your environment. It shouldn't be "trendy". Clever people are reproducing old fabrics and designs. Look back to the past and bring old pieces up-to-date.

My top tip is...
Listen to your client or listen to yourself. Don't listen to friends or trends. Don't lose sight of your passions. Remember less is more. You can always add more in later.

The best advice I ever had was:
"Buy what pleases your eye, and when it ceases to do so, get rid of it." My trainer and interior designer, John Fowler, who's unfortunately long gone, gave me that advice when I was first designing on how to start collecting.

Discover more about Nina's work at **ninacampbellinteriors.com** or browse her latest collections at **shop.ninacampbell.com**

Christmas COLOURS

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Edited by **JESSICA PANTON**

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

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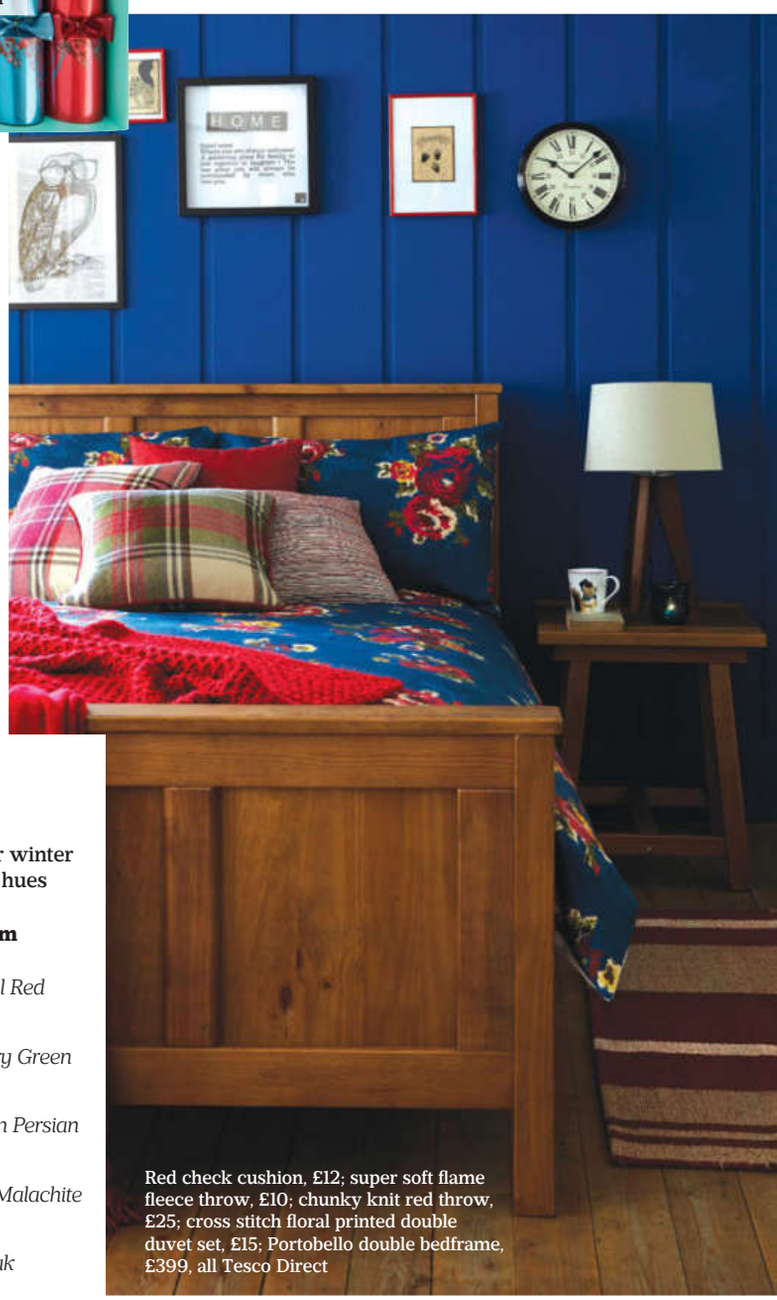
Flowers candles, £29.95 each; white panel pitcher, £35; money box, £34.95; jadeite cake stand, £45, all Liberty



Red check cushion, £12; super soft flame fleece throw, £10; chunky knit red throw, £25; cross stitch floral printed double duvet set, £15; Portobello double bedframe, £399, all Tesco Direct

LED light up frosted cone and berry wreath, £30, Tesco Direct

PAINT PALETTE

Style up your home for winter with these seasonal hues **01383 740 011, craigandrose.com**

Velvet cushion, £35; Chevron rug, £59; flocked green tree, £150; Barra chair in Torrin plaid, ruby, £999, all Marks & Spencer

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Individual Christmas decorations, from £2.99, Dobbies

3 FABRIC MUST-HAVES

- Snowy in red, from £33.30 for Roman blind, Direct Blinds
- Snowflake shimmer in navy, POA, Willow Lane Textiles at Spoonflower
- Chalet skye in red, POA, Moon

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Dimpse Estate® eggshell, from £21 for 750ml; Stiffkey Blue Estate® eggshell, from £21 for 750ml; Stiffkey Blue Modern emulsion, from £42 for 2.5l, all Farrow & Ball

Christmas jumper decoration bauble, £7, Monsoon

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- DIRECT BLINDS 0330 920 1143, directblinds.co.uk
- DOBBIES 0131 561 6406, dobbies.com
- FARROW & BALL 01202 876 141, farrow-ball.com
- FORTNUM & MASON 020 7734 8040, fortnumandmason.com
- GEORGE HOME 0800 952 3003, direct.asda.com
- LIBERTY 020 7734 1234, liberty.co.uk
- MARKS & SPENCER 0333 014 8000, marksandspencer.com
- MONSOON 020 3372 3052, monsoon.co.uk
- MOON 01943 873 181, moons.co.uk
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- SPOONFLOWER spoonflower.com
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Weather forecast art clock, from £275, Bramwell Brown. **020 7183 3651, bramwellbrown.com**

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Bronze dog statue, £49, Candle & Blue. **01284 765 522, candleandblue.co.uk**

Teal and gold sequinned cushion, £22, by Matthew Williamson. 0844 800 8877, debenhams.com

Original newspaper gift set, priced from £29.95, Bygone News. **01934 412 844, bygonenews.com**

Teal cotton tub chair, £395, Oliver Bonas. 020 8974 0110, oliverbonas.com

Ibride Isild decorative wall art tray, £55, Period Features. **01538 372 202, periodfeatures.net**

Christmas fromage round wooden cheese board, £35, Houseology. **0141 280 2047, houseology.com**

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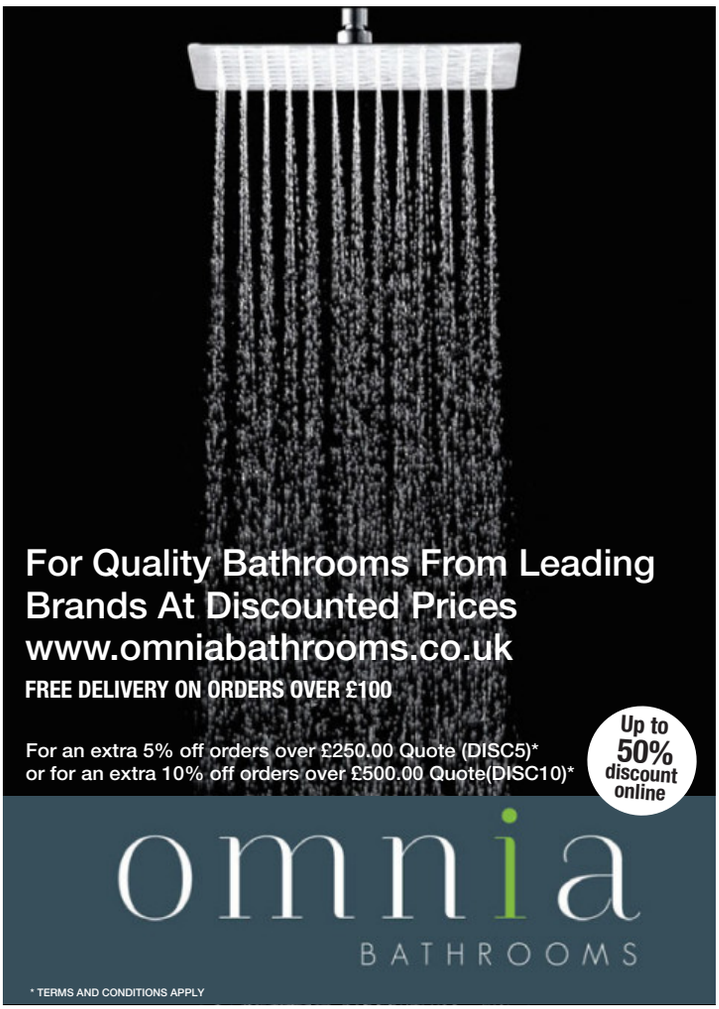
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1 Victoria suite with Hylton bath, £2,550, Hartlebury deck bath shower mixer (shown with standpipes), from £375, and Bayswater mirror, £295, at Heritage Bathrooms. **0330 026 8501, heritagebathrooms.com**

2 Excelsior bath, £4,146, cast in solid marine grade aluminum with a bonded acrylic liner for maximum heat retention, at BC Designs. **01206 827 100, bcdesigns.co.uk**

3 Chetsford floor standing tall cupboard, around £699.98 and Chetsford framed mirror £199,98 at Croydex. **01264 365 881, croydex.com**

The bathroom is one of the busiest rooms in the house so make sure that yours is well-prepared for all the extra traffic this season. There's no getting away with an underperforming bathroom so look at yours with a discerning eye to make sure that it is up to snuff.

One of the quickest ways to smarten up your space is by investing in some storage. Croydex has launched a new collection of furniture to help transform your bathroom from a place of chaos to a calming sanctuary. The Chetsford range includes a practical yet stylish floorstanding tall cupboard which is perfectly complemented by a wooden vanity unit with ceramic handles and an integrated basin. To complete the look and help to make your bathroom appear bigger and brighter, the co-ordinating mirror is an ideal purchase.

If you are thinking about installing a new bathroom or cloakroom then remember that concealed showers, W.Cs and built-in baths all allow panelling or areas to hide toiletries or towels – things which need in the bathroom but which look unsightly and create clutter. Remember that you need to choose pieces which reflect the period of your property. Modern replicas or cheap imitations (i.e. plastic baths) will actually detract from a bathroom so you need to source materials that will stand the test of time and styles which won't date.

Make sure you get handsets as well as an overhead shower, so you can have a quick spritz without wetting your hair and for ease of cleaning. Always carefully consider the lighting put the spots on the items you want to highlight. Good wall lights can bring a change of mood to your bathroom. Think about what you put on the floor; wood or stone is always a good choice in a period bathroom. Also look at your flooring levels, a bath on a raised platform can make a great statement. Consider your heating options such as underfloor heating, electric heating behind mirrors or a fabulous heated towel rail.

INSIDE KNOWLEDGE

Make a statement in your bathroom with Kreidezeit tadelakt, a polished plaster which is based on a traditional Moroccan formula. It is supplied in a natural off-white powder so you can add water and create your own colours from a range of pigments available at Mike Wye & Associates. Tadelakt means 'to rub' or 'knead' in Arabic and it was used to plaster hammans, riads and palaces. Today it is used as an alternative to tiling in wet rooms, showers and bathrooms or as a stunning feature wall. **01409 281 644, mikewye.co.uk**

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£599.00† NORMALLY £1995

Our inspired version captures every detail yet costs a fraction of the original design. You can pay £5242 in Heals** for this furniture classic by Vitra but at Wallace Sacks we're currently offering ours to readers for just £599†. A saving of £1396 on our normal online selling price. True to the design's original proportions, our Eames inspired Lounge Chair with Ottoman is fashioned in exactly the same way as the very first chair.

If you're looking for modern classic without the price tag to go with it, one that's supremely comfortable as well as beautiful to look at, then this Eames inspired Lounge Chair with Ottoman from Wallace Sacks will not disappoint. In fact we are so confident of the design and construction of this chair that we are offering it with a lifetime warranty and since we have been around for over 35 years that isn't an empty promise.

The Eames inspired Lounge Chair and Ottoman are available in Black, Brown or White Leather and come complete with a lifetime warranty*. Just part of Wallace Sacks collection of iconic furniture designs, to order and claim your 70% discount across the entire range visit **wallacesacks.com** and enter code PE301015 at the checkout or call **0800 0114 642**. Delivery is FREE on all orders over £1000. Offer ends 31st December.

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Silent NIGHT

Ensure your visitors have sweet dreams with our guide to guest bedrooms

BEST FOOT FORWARD

The elegant Seville Storage range from Footstools & More provides comfort and convenience for guests. This deep-buttoned model is available in a range of sizes and fabrics, and is ideal for storing blankets and cushions.
0113 345 7526, footstoolsandmore.co.uk

BEDDED BLISS

Opt for an iron bed frame which doesn't encompass so much visual space if you have a smaller room. This stunning Beatrice bed boasts a distinctive, solid design with unique finials and a classic style. Prices start from £799, for a double, from The Wrought Iron and Brass Bed Company.
01485 521 823, wroughtironandbrassbed.co.uk

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Supplying a variety of solid mahogany beds, Lock Stock & Barrel Furniture provides this intricately carved French style Rococo bed. It's also available in all standard sizes and different finishes, such as traditional mahogany, shabby chic, antique white and gold and silver leaf (seen here).
01531 633 333, lockstockandbarrel-uk.com

STEADY ON

To give your spare bedroom that integrated and planned look, choose a bed with a coordinating range of furniture. For a solid and stylish range, go for Unique Chic's Harmony collection in an elegant ivory hue. Prices start from £299 per bed and come with matching tables and wardrobes.
0115 9869 222, uniquechicfurniture.co.uk

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Create an exotic vibe for visitors to enjoy with this Tropical Throw from the Secret Linen Store. The throw, designed by co-founder Molly, is priced at £45 and comes in a stylish grey palm print.
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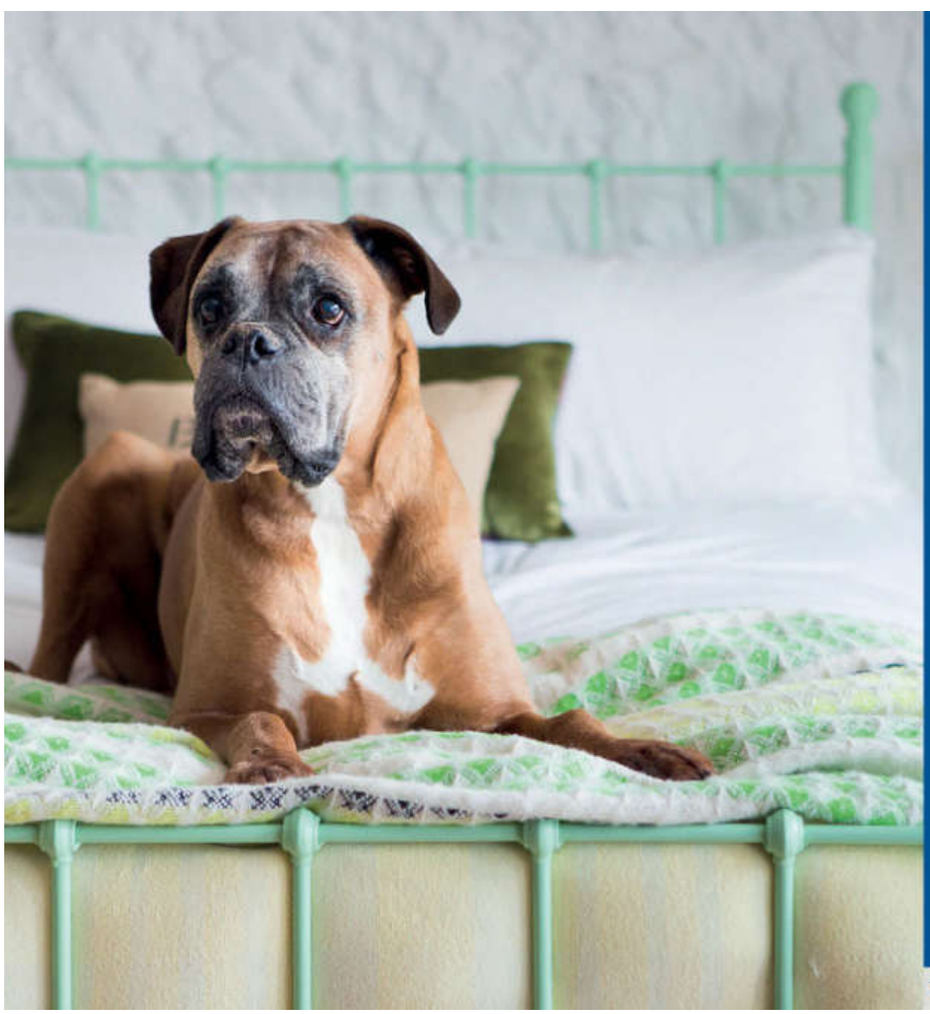

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SEVENTH HEAVEN

BEDDED *BLISS*

This month we go behind the scenes with Tony and Tracy Butler at Seventh Heaven

We enjoy sourcing the most exquisite antique beds, and restoring them back to their original glory

Seventh Heaven specialises in the restoration and retail of antique beds, along with modern mattresses and luxurious bed linen. The company is based at Chirk Mill, a converted water mill in the foothills of the North Wales/Shropshire border. You can discover three floors dedicated to displaying antique beds, 20 of which are assembled with a selection of mattresses and dressed in beautiful bed linen. "We have a resident cat, Fergus, who spends the days choosing which bed to sleep on, and outside we have chickens, peacocks and ducks roaming," says the owner Tony Butler,

His parents started the business from a London market stall in 1971. "They briefly had a shop in Surbiton before moving to North Wales. In its heyday in the 1990s and early 2000s Seventh Heaven was world-renowned for supplying the most fabulous selection of antique beds. People travelled the length of the UK to visit us, and even came from abroad. The rise of the Internet slowly changed people's habits but our customers included the general public and the rich and famous," he recalls.

ON THE MOVE

He remembers travelling the country in a van with his parents hunting for beds as a youngster. "When I was a teenager going to France, Spain and Morocco was exciting and it was obvious the business was growing, but I vowed to go my own way. But after completing my degree in astrophysics from Edinburgh I decided to join the company for a year to help my parents manage an increasingly successful business. 25 years later I'm still here. My wife, Tracy, came on board 15 years ago and now with our sons and daughters helping in the holidays it really is a family business," he says.

Sadly the original Seventh Heaven fell victim to the recession in 2008. "It took us five years to build the company back up, and our proudest moment has been resurrecting it from the ashes. Now with a small team of our original, loyal employees we once again supply some of the best antique beds in the UK," says Tony. The Butlers don't do things by halves. As well as rejuvenating the business in a tough economy, Tony and Tracy were bringing up four young children and converting a workshop on site into a new home.

VICTORIAN VISIONS

In terms of design, Tony is a fan of mid-Victorian splendour. "I love the brass beds and cast-iron four posters. Some of the cast work designs are exquisite. Tracy prefers Art Deco pieces and the Art Nouveau movement," he says, "We enjoy sourcing the most exquisite antique beds, and restoring them back to their original glory. Some beds appear incredibly rough when we find them, but we always get a kick out of imagining how they will look once complete.

"When a bed is finished, dressed in our showroom and presented on our website it is almost a shame to sell it, but it is very rewarding to see a fabulous bed delivered to a new home, for a second lease of life. We are expanding our plans at Chirk Mill to include a small antiques centre and tearoom. It is really is a fabulous setting by the river. We are also increasingly selling internationally over the internet and it is exciting to see the business grow strongly once again."

For more INFORMATION

Choose your next beautiful bed with the help of the expert team at Seventh Heaven. Find out everything you need to know from bases to bed covers by calling **01691 777 622** or clicking on **seventh-heaven.co.uk**

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01282 813 235, esse.com

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01929 472 121, theagaexchange.co.uk

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This traditional Klover Smart 120 range is made in Italy and will meet all your heating needs, as well as cooking. It runs on wood pellets, a low carbon renewable fuel, and is automated, so it lights itself when heat or hot water is required, and turns itself off when the job is done. It has a large hotplate on top and an oven, and is available in cream, red or black to complement your kitchen's style.

0844 332 0155, firepower.co.uk

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Using replacement Aga parts, West Country Cookers provides a wealth of reconditioned Agas. Its fantastic cookers are cast and engineered to the same Aga standards, and it supplies a variety of pieces and spares for your existing model. Cookware and starter packs are also available. **01548 830 069, westcountrycookers.com**

PERFECT FINISH

This Italian J.Corradi wood-burning stove combination features a triple oven, electric oven and gas/induction hob. You're sure to find one to suit your decor scheme too as it's available in white, black, burgundy and dark green, with stainless steel, brass and antique brass finishing options. Priced from £9,620.

01584 861 628, ludlowstoves.co.uk

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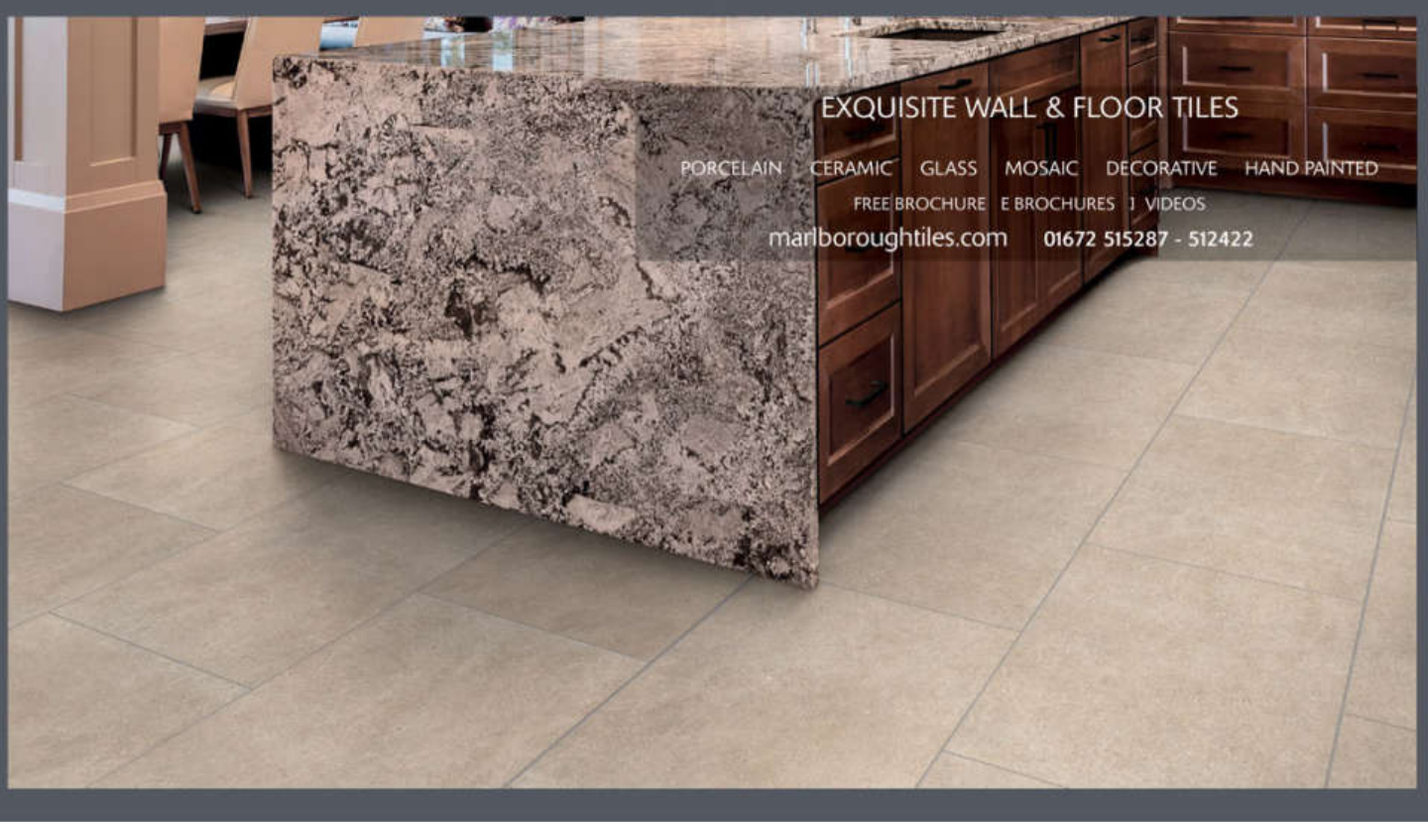

With its smooth, matt finish Reno is ideal for the busy family. Pictured here, in light grey, it is also available in several earthy tones that create a feeling of warmth and curved base units can be incorporated into its design for a unique finish. Kitchens are priced from £7,500 at Masterclass Kitchens. **01443 449 499**, **masterclasskitchens.co.uk**

Timeless CHIC

Susan Dickerson reveals how to update your kitchen

Fashionistas know that trends in kitchens come around again, just as they do on the catwalk. White, burgundy, greige and green have all had their moments, and it is remarkable how the look and feel of a certain handle can date a room. The trick is to work with the proportions of your house (and your bank account) so that you can create a kitchen which is both affordable and timeless.

"There has been a certain blurring of the edges between classic and modern designs in country properties, with an increasing trend for incorporating contemporary kitchens into such situations," says Steve Tough, at Masterclass Kitchens. "This 'modern country' style has themes that are common to both classic and modern designs, ensuring that it doesn't look out of place in an older home, compared to the rest of the property. Material trends are certainly helping in this regard, with timber increasingly being incorporated into modern kitchens. Fashions such as white gloss and handleless units also work well, as they keep things simple. The use of colour is also very important here, with neutral tones such as grey offering a timeless appeal that won't date."

TAKE STOCK

Look carefully at the kitchen you've currently got and assess what you want to keep and what you'd like to change. Does the existing layout work for you and your needs? Even small U-shaped or galley kitchens can be improved with space-saving storage or a more convenient oven, so don't assume that your work zone is beyond help. "The shape of the kitchen is also important – curves are very on-trend currently and sit equally as well in a classic setting, while some open shelving units and surfaces at varying heights help blend classic with modern successfully," says Steve.

Sometimes we're reluctant to spend money on improvements if we think we haven't found our forever home, but when you consider how hard your kitchen works for you and your family every day, skimping isn't advisable. Make sure that you check the internal fittings and fixtures of drawers and cabinetry are up to snuff, rather than being seduced by pretty exteriors. Runners and handles get a lot of wear and tear, so you need to be sure they are up to the challenge. Have a look at the way manufacturers like Blum make kitchen furniture easy to live with (blum.com) and remember that innovations such as push-release doors are cascading down to the middle market.

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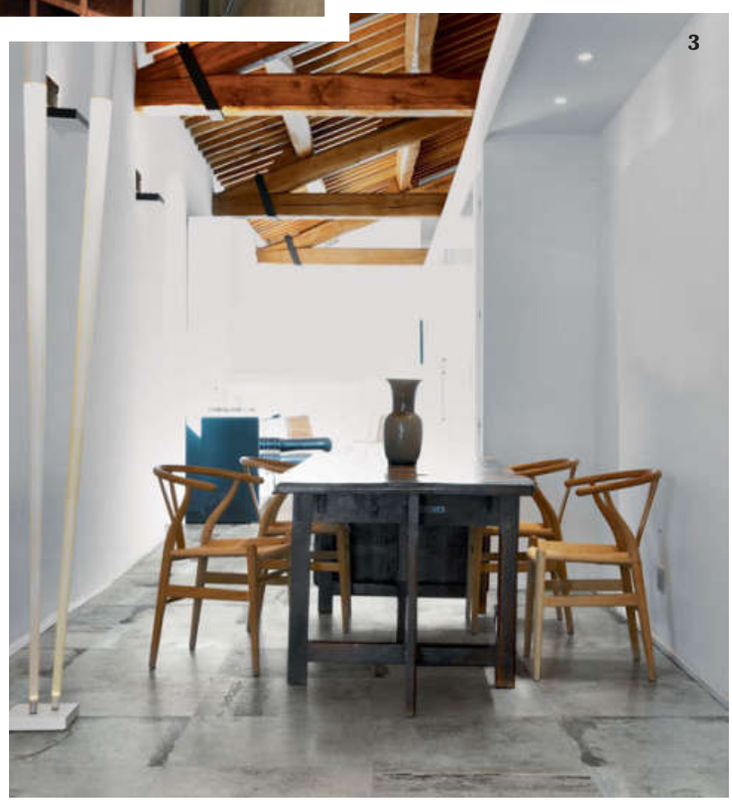
Kitchen manufacturers realise that as we are living for longer, we want more from our hubs. Choose brassware which is easy and comfortable for the whole household to use and ensure that sinks are at a comfortable height. Pantries are having a revival, as it is convenient to have groceries in one place, but make sure that shelves are easy to reach. Floor-to-ceiling storage may seem a good idea but there's a danger that you may never use anything on the top shelf.

A good kitchen designer is worth his or her weight in gold so don't be afraid to bring in the professionals and be upfront about your budget and your lifestyle. Remember that the kitchen is a multi-purpose family room, so there needs to be scope for charging electronic devices and as well as comfortable and functional seating.

Above all, new additions need to be easy to clean. We only appreciate how important splashbacks and wall tiles are if we live without them so don't be mean with any upstands behind your units. Tiles are an excellent way of personalising your kitchen so make sure they are not an afterthought. Just as make-up artists labour to create a natural look, remember that layers of subtle nuances all add up in a kitchen. It's not as easy as replacing curtains or cushions, so take your time to choose flooring and wall coverings which suit you and make you feel happy.



1 The Longford classic contemporary kitchen looks great in a Victorian property. Hand-painted cabinets, period oak accents and brass highlights work well with the modern colours Kitchens are priced from £30,000 at Humphrey Munson. **01371 821 300, humphreymunson.co.uk**

2 Conservatory kitchens make great extensions for period properties. The wood helps to create a relaxed and cosy feel and unites cabinets and islands. Bespoke kitchens at Woodstock Furniture are priced on request. **020 8876 0131, woodstockfurniture.co.uk**

3 These Mendip Stone tiles have a variegated finish making each one unique. Their large size (40 x 80 cm) makes them a super choice for kitchen and dining areas and they cost £58.15 per square metre at Marlborough Tiles. **01672 515 287, marlboroughtiles.com**

4 A durable and good-looking fireclay sink looks good in these hand-made cabinets by shakertraditions.co.uk. The Classic Double Bowl sink is priced from £65 at Shaws of Darwen. **01254 775 111, shawsofdarwen.com**

5 The Milbourne comes in a palette of 24 colours and is shown here in Stone. Milbourne kitchens are priced from £9,000 at Second Nature retailers. **01325 505 539, sncollection.co.uk**

PIC OF THE MONTH

This month, we love this upcycled antique desk from BowieBell Vintage & Upcycled Furniture. Send us your latest interior makes and home must-haves via our social media channels.

Stag cushion, £9.99; red Balmoral rug, from £54.99; Spitalfields wide cabinet, £299.99; Benedict leather armchair, £549.99, all Dunelm. **0345 165 6565, dunelm.com**

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We're inspired by Dunelm's cosy Christmas collection with its luxury layers and Yuletide prints. Like our page for the latest interior trends and shopping tips.

TWITTER

@PeriodIdeas

Brighten up your abode with wonderful winter lighting, such as this Dobbies' Noel lighting set. Follow us on Twitter for all our latest home finds.

PINTEREST

pinterest.com/periodideas

We're getting prepared for Santa's arrival with some traditional seasonal style. These red accessories from Tesco are on our Christmas 2015 Pinterest board.

BLOG

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This month online, we've hand-picked the best soft furnishings to snuggle in this winter. We've got expert advice and fantastic prizes up for grabs too.

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Ski School

Use an Alpine chic style to transform your abode into a cosy haven this Christmas

Edited by **JENNA GREGORY**

Wooden vintage skis, £85, Nordic House. **01872 223 220, nordichouse.co.uk**

Right Malvern sofa in Grace linen, £599.99; rustic tree card holder, £7.99; white stag ornament, £19.99; Victoria wing back armchair, £249.99, all Dunelm. 0345 165 6565, **dunelm.com**

Below Catherine Lansfield Stag duvet in navy, from £17, Tesco's. 0800 323 4050, **tesco.com**

Be inspired by the Alps, Scandinavia and the American Rockies and add chalet chic with cosy accessories

Sometimes it's nice to get away from it all – the pressures of last-minute shopping, seasonal music you've heard too many times and the general Christmas chaos. There's a real pleasure in coming home from the hustle and bustle, and the idea of hibernating in a snug log cabin nestled amongst the snow-capped firs seems very appealing.

The architecture of these mountain homes is unique. Wood is the key element in the structure and it is also visible throughout the interiors with exposed beams, wall cladding and panelled ceilings, exposed floorboards, wooden shutters and, of course, logs piled high for the fire. This may all sound a little dark, but it creates an incredibly cosy and atmospheric space, and some chalets have high loft spaces, vaulted ceilings and mezzanines to lift the light. Many Nordic and Scandi builds feature paler wood to lighten the décor and use more neutral tones with blonde wood and wicker for a softer look.

Though we may not all have the opportunity to escape to the mountains, there's no need to pack your bags. You can re-create this timeless style in your own home with just a few clever techniques by adding timber and some cosy accessories to your abode.

Texture is a key ingredient of a chalet's interior, bringing tactile interest and a touch of masculinity to the rooms with brown leathers and dark furniture. Use all types of textural appeal - rough-hewn wood will add rugged charm together with visible grains and knotty pines. Consider installing decorative beams which can be used to encase light fittings. Although harder to come by now, heavy duty wooden railway sleepers are perfect rough-wood pieces to use in a fireside surround or as steps to adjoining rooms. For flooring and surfaces combine exposed textures, such as slate, tiled granite and stone or use extra width plank flooring to give a rustic look - just be sure to layer with hides, skins and faux furs for a cosy feel underfoot. Match this by dressing up your sofas and seating with soft throws and woollen blankets.

Reflect aspects of nature by bringing the winter surroundings inside. Deck the halls with branches and antlers and use fir leaves and pine cones as table decorations. You can also introduce wood with accessories or create a feature wall of stacked logs. Try wooden table lamps or, for a talking-point, prop wooden skis or a rustic ladder up against the wall.

If you want to avoid creating an overly twee alpine-lodge steer away from classic reds and gingham and aim for modern French greys, Arctic whites and neutral colours. For traditional Christmas charm hang Fair Isle stockings and patterned cushions to add a touch of Nordic appeal.

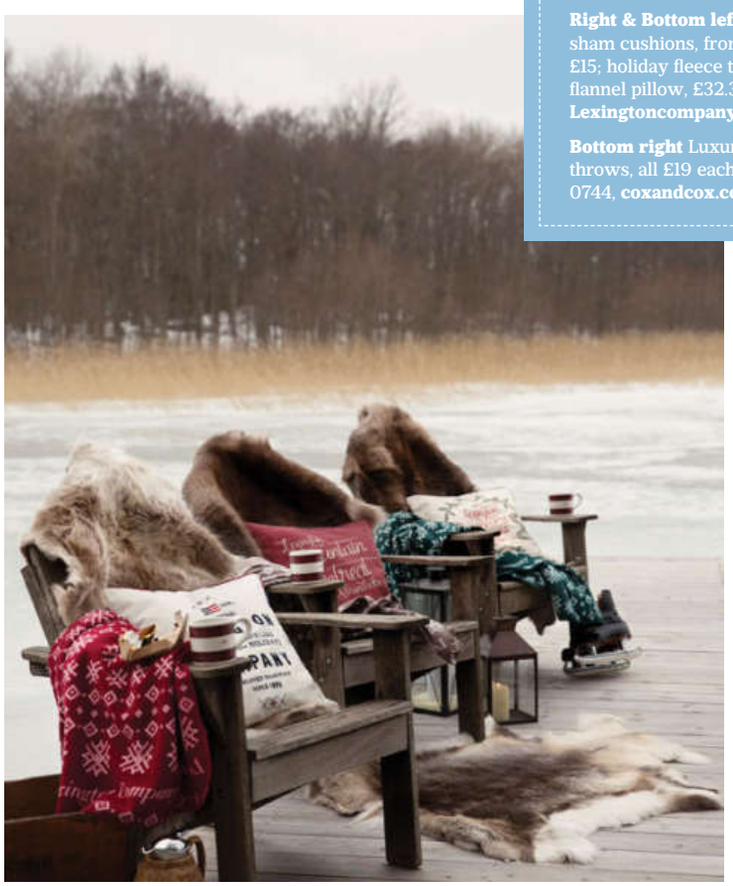
We may not get the snowy views this winter, but you will bring a bit of mountain magic to your home with this interior design style. So pull up a fireside chair, pour yourself a glass of vin chaud and enjoy a spot of apres ski!

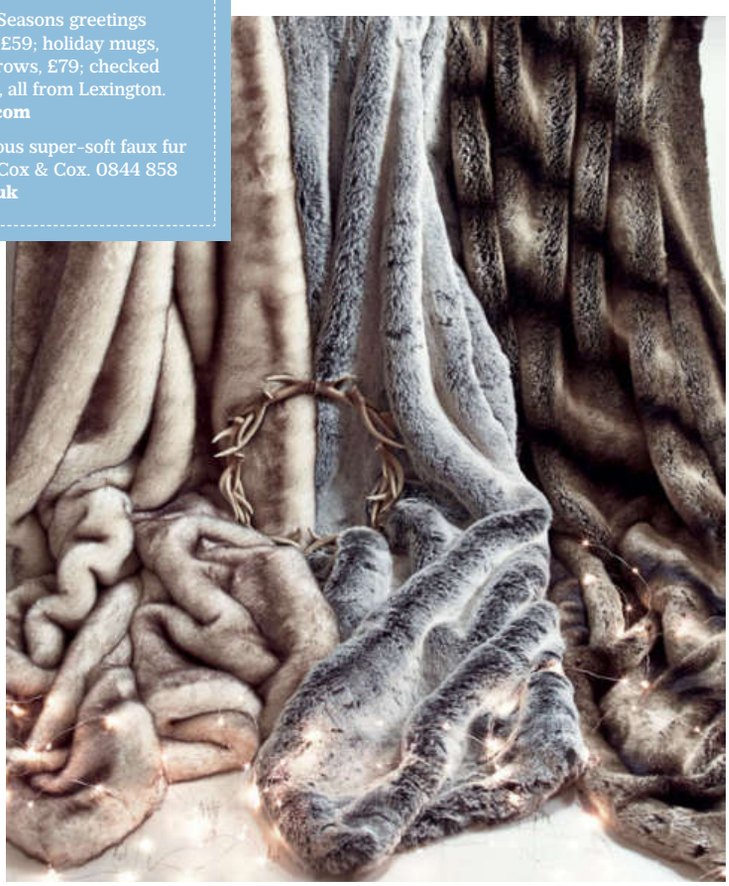
Tartan wing chair, £399; Edderton cube, £39; Husky throw, £49; rush round wicker stool, £35, all from Very. **0843 515 9402, very.co.uk**

Left Sports D'Hiver poster print by Roger Broders, from £37.99, AllPosters. **020 8435 6555, AllPosters.co.uk**

Right & Bottom left Seasons greetings sham cushions, from £59; holiday mugs, £15; holiday fleece throws, £79; checked flannel pillow, £32.37, all from Lexington. **Lexingtoncompany.com**

Bottom right Luxurious super-soft faux fur throws, all £19 each, Cox & Cox. 0844 858 0744, **coxandcox.co.uk**





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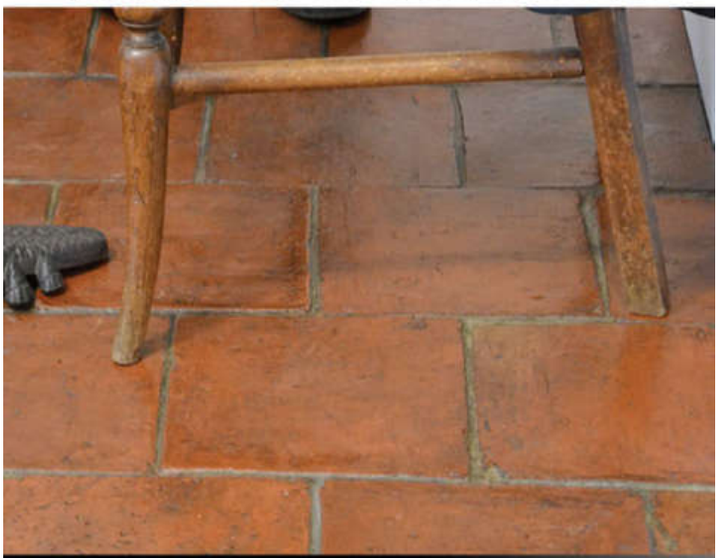

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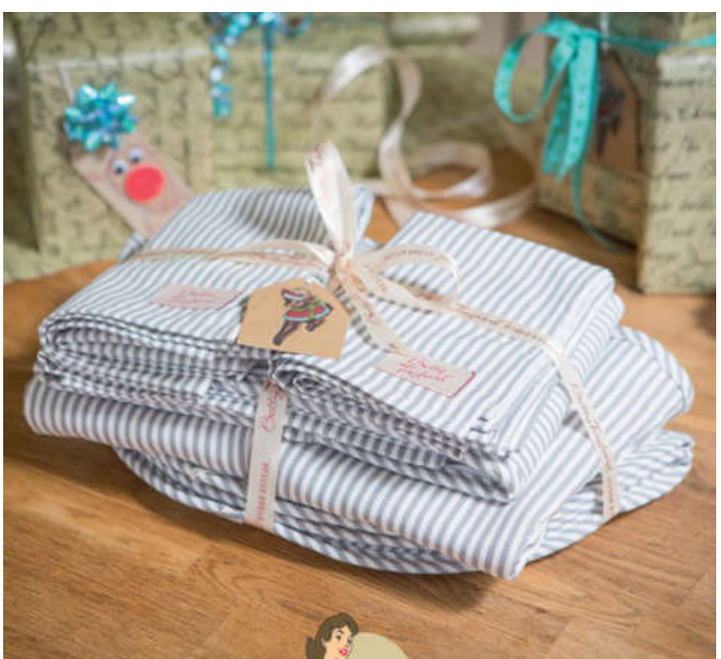

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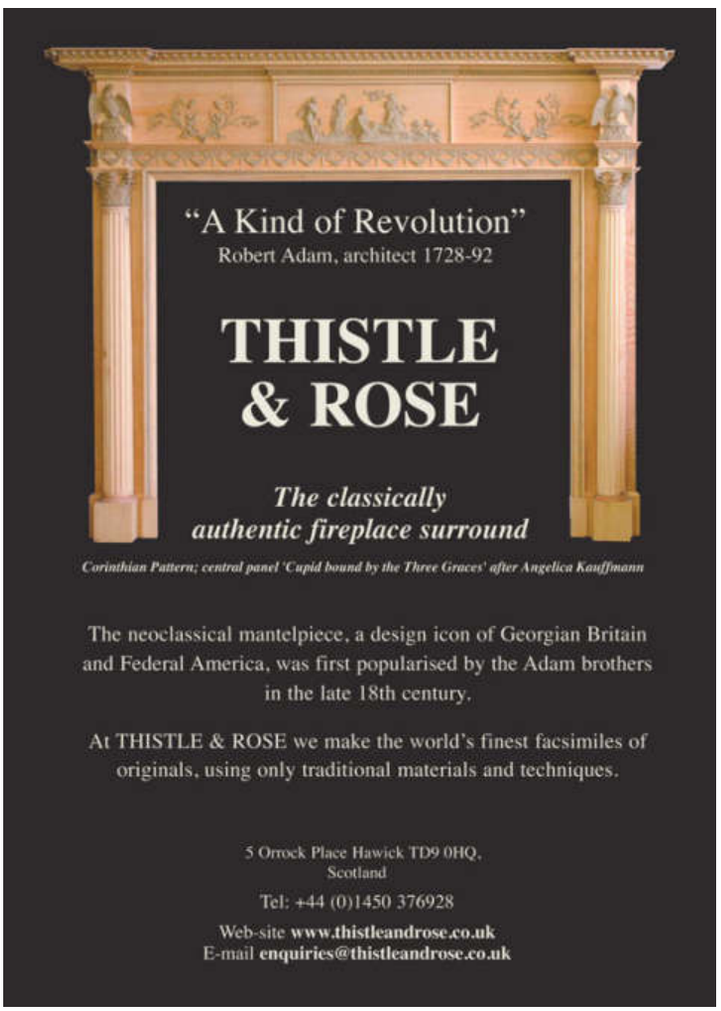
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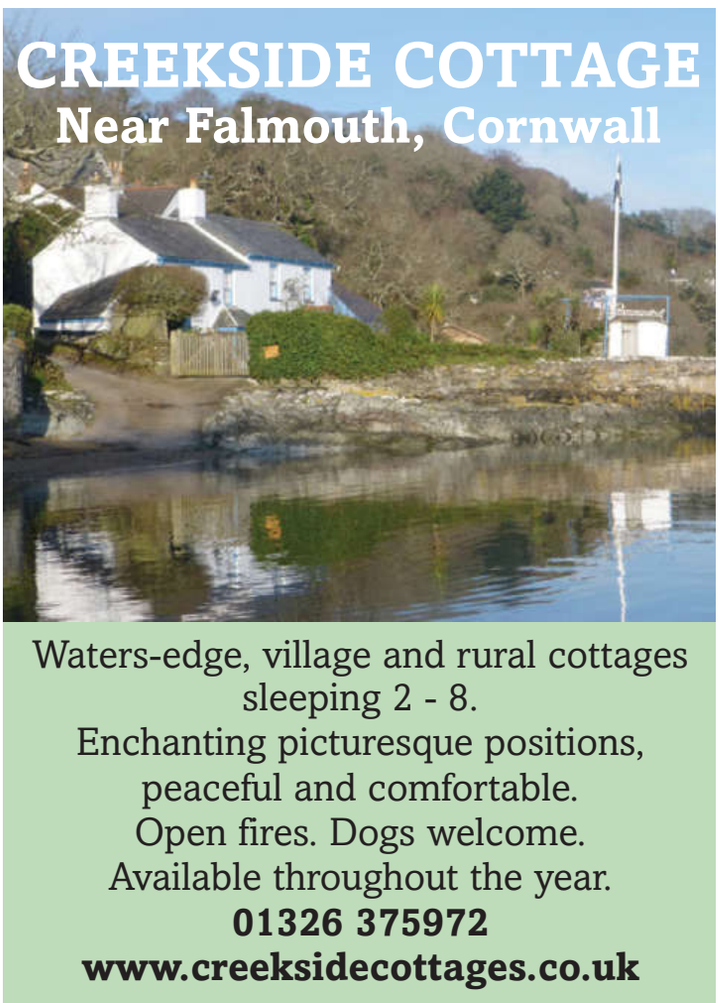
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Handmade HOME

Craft your own Christmas with our pick of festive makes

With the festive season in full swing, it's time to get creative and crafty with your Christmas décor. We've put together a wonderful collection of easy-make projects with the help of the expert team at *Homemaker* magazine, so you can craft your own Christmas magic with home-made delights. So, whether you're preparing your dining table for a festive feast, creating a proud and sparkling tree, or transforming your living space into Santa's grotto, it's time to cut, stitch and sew your way to a stylish Christmas.

Rustic feather Christmas crackers

YOU'LL NEED:

- Cardboard tube or kitchen roll tubes
- Brown Kraft paper
- Green 6mm wide ribbon
- Diamante silver rondel bead wire
- Green duck feathers
- Natural jute twine
- Small twigs or cinnamon sticks
- White glitter paper
- Pinking shears
- Craft knife, pencil and ruler
- Double-sided tape
- Cracker gifts and party hats to insert

1 Cut the cardboard tubes to size (11cm long) and place a small gift and paper hat inside. Cut a rectangle of brown Kraft paper large enough to wrap around the tube and extend over the two ends by 15cm. Centre the tube onto the paper rectangle and roll inside. Secure with a piece of double-sided tape.

2 To make securing the ends of the crackers easier, insert another tube into one end, leaving a small gap between the main cracker tube and the other, take a short length of string and wrap around the gap between the tubes and then tie the two ends in a knot, the extra tube will help the paper to gather evenly around the cracker, after it can be removed.

3 Repeat the process on the remaining end, trim the string, then tie green ribbon bows on top. Pinch the paper ends together and trim with a pair of pinking shears to create a decorative finish.

4 Cut a strip of white glitter paper, wrap around the centre of the cracker and secure with double-sided tape. Wrap a length of twine around the middle, securing a small twig or cinnamon stick in place. Tie the remainder of the twine into a bow. Secure the wired rondel to the centre of the cracker, then slip a green feather underneath to finish.

Musical wreath

YOU'LL NEED:

- Sheet music
- Green paper in two colours
- Stiff card
- Quilling tool
- Hot glue gun
- PVA glue
- Compass and pencil

Head to page 10 of our mini-mag for more great makes

1 Cut a 20cm diameter circle of stiff card to use as a base. Use a pencil and compass to mark out a concentric circle, 4cm from the middle as a guideline. Trim 25 pages of sheet music into 9cm squares (or enough to fill the card base) and roll each piece into a cone, securing with PVA glue.

2 Arrange the cones onto the card circle, placing the points against the pencil line, and glue down securely. Cut smaller 7cm squares of green paper in two colours and roll into cones, as before. Place these in a concentric circle over the sheet music to form a second layer.

3 Cut leftover sheet music into circular pieces. Trim each circle into a spiral and slot the outer end in the quilling tool. Roll the spiral tightly around the tool and release to form a rose. Secure the rolled petals with a dab of hot glue and fix to the centre of the wreath, as shown.

4 Repeat on a smaller scale and attach a ribbon hook for matching tree decorations.

DIY *Tree ornaments*

YOU'LL NEED:

- FIMO soft in colours cognac, indian red, peppermint and white
- FIMO liquid gel
- Modelling tools, mini shaped cutters, acrylic roller and grind'n'polish sponges
- Coloured inks
- Christmas shaped cookie cutters
- Plastic containers
- Cocktail stick
- Baking tray
- Baking parchment
- Ribbon

1 Knead a block of cognac coloured FIMO until soft and roll out to 5mm thick. Cut a shape using a cookie cutter and use a smaller cutter to make a hole in the middle. Add small balls of white, peppermint and red FIMO for decoration using a modelling tool to push one ball onto another.

2 Make a hole near the top with a cocktail stick; check it goes all the way through as the ribbon will be threaded through later. Place the decoration on a baking tray covered with baking parchment and press down gently, ensuring there are no raised areas that the FIMO liquid gel can seep through.

3 Squeeze a small amount of FIMO liquid gel into a plastic container. Add a drop of coloured ink to the gel and stir with a modelling tool until it is evenly mixed. Scoop up a blob of the coloured gel with a teaspoon and drop it into the middle cut out space of the decoration. Spread it evenly to fill the hole to a maximum of 3mm deep to retain the transparency of the gel.

4 Make more decorations in different shapes in the same way. Place the baking tray onto the middle shelf of a pre-heated oven and bake at 110°C for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Use grind'n'polish sponges to smooth any uneven edges and tie a ribbon through the hole to complete your decoration.

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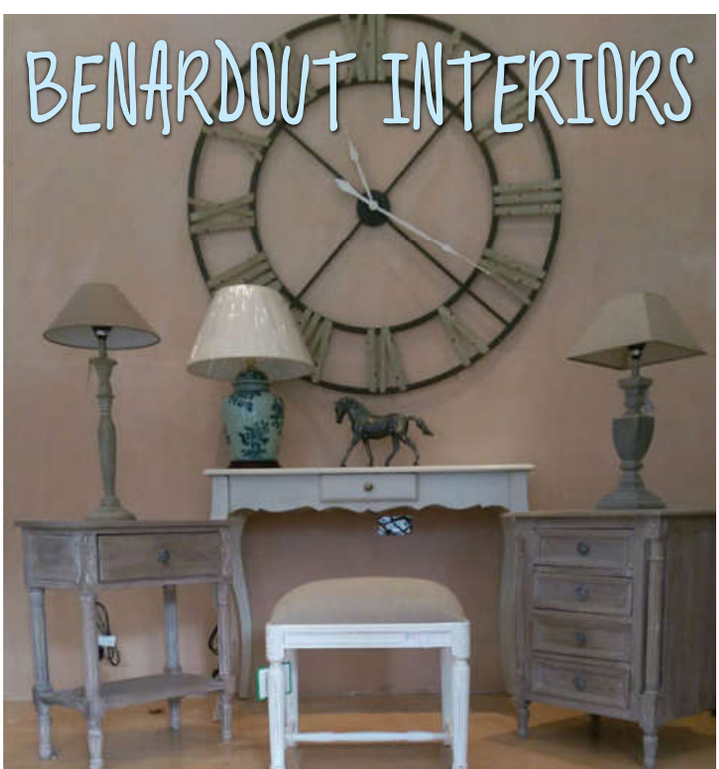

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Sew napkins

YOU'LL NEED:
- Fabric
- Iron and ironing board
- Clear ruler
- Water-soluble fabric marker
- Fabric scissors
- Sewing machine and thread
- Ribbon
- Leaves, twigs and felt shapes

1 Pre-wash and press the fabric. Measure and mark a 15-inch line on the wrong side of the fabric, using a clear quilter's ruler and a watersoluble fabric marker.

2 Snip into the fabric at the edge of this line with scissors, then tear. The fabric will tear on the straight of the grain, don't worry if it doesn't tear down the drawn line. Use the torn line as your new straight edge and measure the other sides from that.

3 Repeat this step for the other three sides of the napkin; measure and mark the 15-inch line, snip the edge, and tear. Turn edges back by half an inch twice and hem with a straight stitch.

4 Decorate with ribbons, leaves, twigs and felt shapes.

For more seasonal makes and crafts, visit **PERIODIDEAS.COM** *and* **HOMEMAKER MAGAZINE.CO.UK**

Place card holders

YOU'LL NEED:
- Glass votives
- Small bit of clay
- Scraps of real or fake moss
- Bamboo skewers
- Washi tape/ scraps of paper
- Berries or animal motifs

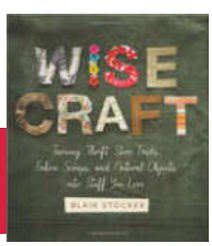
1 Clean the glass votive, then add a bit of modelling clay at the bottom. Cover the clay with scraps of moss.

2 Prepare the labels by adding washi tape or a bit of paper to one side of the bamboo skewer to make a flag. Write the name on the flag. Finish by poking the skewer down into the clay.

3 Decorate the moss with red berries, holly, or animal motifs.

FOR MORE *information*

Taken from *Wise Craft: Turning Thrift Store Finds, Fabric Scraps, and Natural Objects Into Stuff You Love* by Blair Stocker (£13.99, Running Press).



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Use scraps of spare wallpaper, such as these floral designs from Laura Ashley, to make matching wrapping paper

DIY *floral crackers*

YOU'LL NEED:

- Cardboard tube or kitchen roll tube
- Scraps of wallpaper – we've used Laura Ashley's floral prints
- Gingham ribbon in various colours
- Craft knife, pencil and ruler
- Double-sided tape
- Cracker gifts and party hats

1 Cut the cardboard tubes to 11cm long, place a small gift and paper hat inside, then trim a 16cm x 32cm rectangle of wallpaper.

2 Next, make the snipped sections where the ribbon will be tied; draw an 11cm line in the centre of the rectangle to represent where the tube will sit. From either end, mark 4.5cm – the diameter of the tube. Now snip down the wallpaper at 1cm intervals, in between the 4.5cm line and the end of the 11cm.

3 Place the tube onto the middle of the paper rectangle and roll inside. Secure with a piece of double-sided tape. Insert another tube into the shorter end (this is just to help it keep its shape), then tie ribbon around the snipped gap.

Winter wonderland

Win a fabulous dining and stay package in North Yorkshire, worth £500!

Sitting on the beautiful boundary of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park, The Black Swan Hotel is located in the enchanting market town of Helmsley. Providing an ideal gateway into North Yorkshire and its breathtaking scenery, The Black Swan is the perfect place to get away this winter.

Renowned for its fine dining, the hotel's latest dining and stay package will delight any foodie. *Six of One & Half a Dozen of the Other* includes a six-course tasting menu and allows guests the novelty of choice. Each dish is chosen from a mouth-watering selection to create your own bespoke tasting menu. Its 3AA rosette restaurant, The Gallery, is a superb setting to enjoy this meal as well as some stunning local artwork, while the surrounding market place is ideal for walking.

One lucky reader will win a one night stay with their guest, including a glass of Prosecco served with homemade scones, jam and cream on arrival, a six course customised Tasting Menu at dinner, overnight accommodation in a classic bedroom and a full English breakfast prior to departure. For more details, call **01439 770 466** or visit **blackswan-helmsley.**

For details of Six of One and Half a Dozen of the Other, with an option of one or two nights, please see hotel website. Offer is made subject to availability. (Available until 31st March 2016, Saturday nights are not available).

T&Cs

Prize excludes bank holiday weekends and festive period. Prize is subject to availability and stay is to be taken by end of June 2016.

Clever clocks

Win a Bramwell Brown small Weather Clock and a small Tide Clock, worth over £500!

If you're an avid time-keeper, weather-watcher or sea-searcher, browse Bramwell Brown's miraculous creations. Founded by brother and sister team Sarah and Rob Leigh-Bramwell, the company is committed to using traditional British craftsmanship.

The Weather Clock is a reinvention of the traditional barometer, measuring the change in atmospheric pressure and translating this into a 'Mechanimated' forecast of very dry, fair, change, rain or stormy weather. Available in a black, blue, grey, copper and chrome frame, the clock face comes in traditional and contemporary styles, both designed by popular poster artist Peter McDermott. The Tide Clock features innovative moving artwork that

changes throughout the day. With a semi-diurnal timer at its core, the clock displays accurate half-hourly updates on the current local tidal direction and time until next high and low tides. The tide's current state is visually depicted in a mechanically animated harbour with bobbing boats. Two lucky readers will win either a small Weather Clock, or a small Tide Clock, worth £275 each. Call **020 7183 3651** or visit **bramwellbrown.com** for more information.

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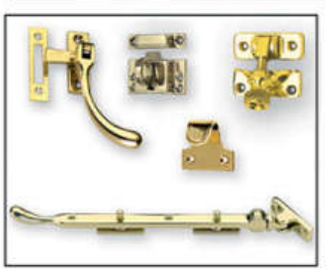
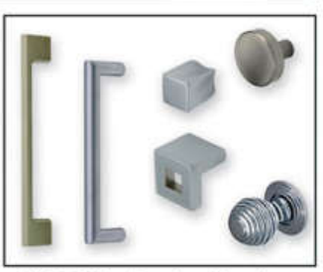

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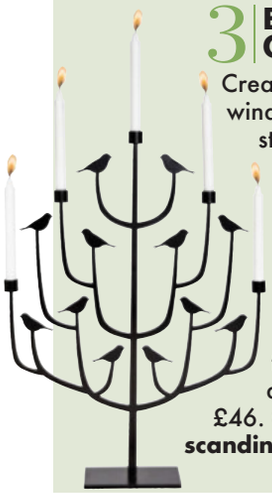
3 BLAZING GLORY



Create a dazzling window display with this striking Pluto candle holder, featuring bird silhouettes. With room for up to five candles, its clean lines make it suitable for contemporary and traditional homes and it is priced at £46. **01436 673 623, scandianvianshop.co.uk**

4 PRETTY PERCH

Style up any window frame with the attractive Rustic Robin range from Dunelm. The collection includes tea-light holders and garlands featuring red festive shades and tartan prints. **0345 165 6565, dunelm.com**

5 DOOR DECOR

Bring a touch of tradition to your home's threshold with this silver glitter leaf and berry wreath from Tesco Direct, priced at £10, ideal for creating an inviting entrance in time for Christmas parties. **0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct**

6 KNOCK KNOCK

Homebase has a wealth of products for your front door. It's not always easy to incorporate your entrance into your scheme, but adding a simple wreath, garland or new paint shade can refresh your property's exterior, without the hassle and expense of a complete overhaul. **0345 077 8888, homebase.co.uk**

7 DRESS TO IMPRESS

The Highlands collection of super-soft, brushed weaves guarantees a warm welcome, presenting the feel and look of pure wool without the high price tag. The collection embraces checks, stripes and textured tartans and is great for curtains and drapes, as well as throws, upholstery and accessories. Priced from £23.99 per m. **01274 688 448, prestigious.co.uk**

8 OPEN WIDE

This cute and quirky door stopper will complement a variety of interior schemes and bring a charming touch to your doors. Shaped like a house and featuring red spot print fabric, it costs £9.99. **0330 333 4220, gettingpersonal.co.uk**

9 LIGHTEN UP

Dress your windows with large, sweeping drapes for a dramatic impact in your interiors. Choose a stylish heavy fabric to draw attention to light-filled spaces and to keep out the cold, pictured here from the Deco Grand collection at Marks & Spencer. **0333 014 8000, marksandspencer.com**

10 SEAT CHIC

Get comfy this winter with House of Fraser's Wingback occasional chair. Ideal for window nooks in period properties, this trendy seat is the perfect place to curl up with a good book, while admiring the view from your window, priced at £995. **0345 602 1073, houseoffraser.co.uk**

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Window of opportunity

Where can I go to find out more about building regulations for windows?

I recommend that you contact Fensa (the Fenestration Self-Assessment Scheme), which is a non-profit organisation. Anyone who installs replacement windows, doors or roof lights must comply with current standards. This is to reduce energy loss in line with government policy. Bear in mind that when selling your property, your purchaser's solicitors will ask for evidence that any replacement glazing installed since April 2002 complies with the Building Regulations. There are currently two ways to prove compliance: a certificate showing that the work has been done by an installer who is registered with Fensa or a similar body, or a certificate from the local authority building control stating that the work has been approved under the Building Regulations.

Susan Dickerson, Period Ideas

020 7645 3700, fensa.co.uk

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

OPEN *UP*

Discover all you need to know about maintaining your windows and doors this Christmas

Hold tight

I'm looking for some stylish window fasteners. Any ideas?

Never take short cuts when it comes to window furniture, as you are investing in equipment which you may use several times a day for years. Look for something with a simple design which is easy for everyone in your household to operate and will feel comfortable to the touch. Our new bulbend casement fasteners might be just the ticket for you. We have two new versions, a standard and an offset, which are available in four different finishes and are designed to match our new bulbend casement stays.

Robin Graham, Fulton & Bray

01228 672 900, fultonandbray.co.uk

Safe & sound

How can I securely update my sash windows?

With our new innovative concealed spring sash, period property owners can benefit from traditional aesthetics with improved levels of security. Our products are accredited by Secured by Design and the new concealed spring sash has been fully security tested. The springs are completely concealed within the box frame. We also glaze internally which increases security performance. Our products have a life expectancy of 55 - 65 years or more, and a variety of micro-porous paint or stain finishes ensure they look better for longer. **Owen Dare, Mumford & Wood**

01621 818 155, mumfordwood.com

Open door policy

Please can you give me some tips on buying front door furniture?

Try to choose ironmongery in a finish that complements the colour of your front door, as well as the overall exterior style of your home. Co-ordinate the elements as much as possible, including smaller items such as door knockers (like the lion pictured), bells, key escutcheons and numbers. Plated finishes, such as chrome or nickel, are often more durable than brass when fitted outside. Don't forget security. A front door should have at least one (ideally two) insurance-approved locks fitted to it. Most commonly, this would be a five lever deadlock conforming to British Standard BS3621. Fitting a spy hole and door chain/limiter is also a good idea. Letter plates come in many shapes and sizes. Try not to go too small as the postman may have to force larger items of mail through it. Too large and you have more of a security risk.

Rahul Daryanani, Danico Brass

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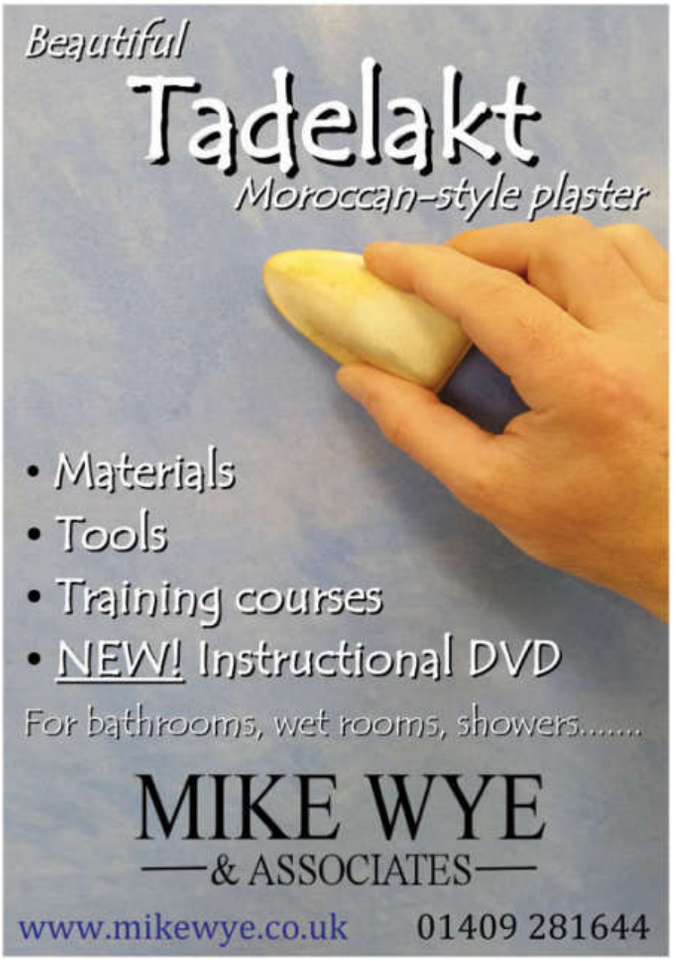
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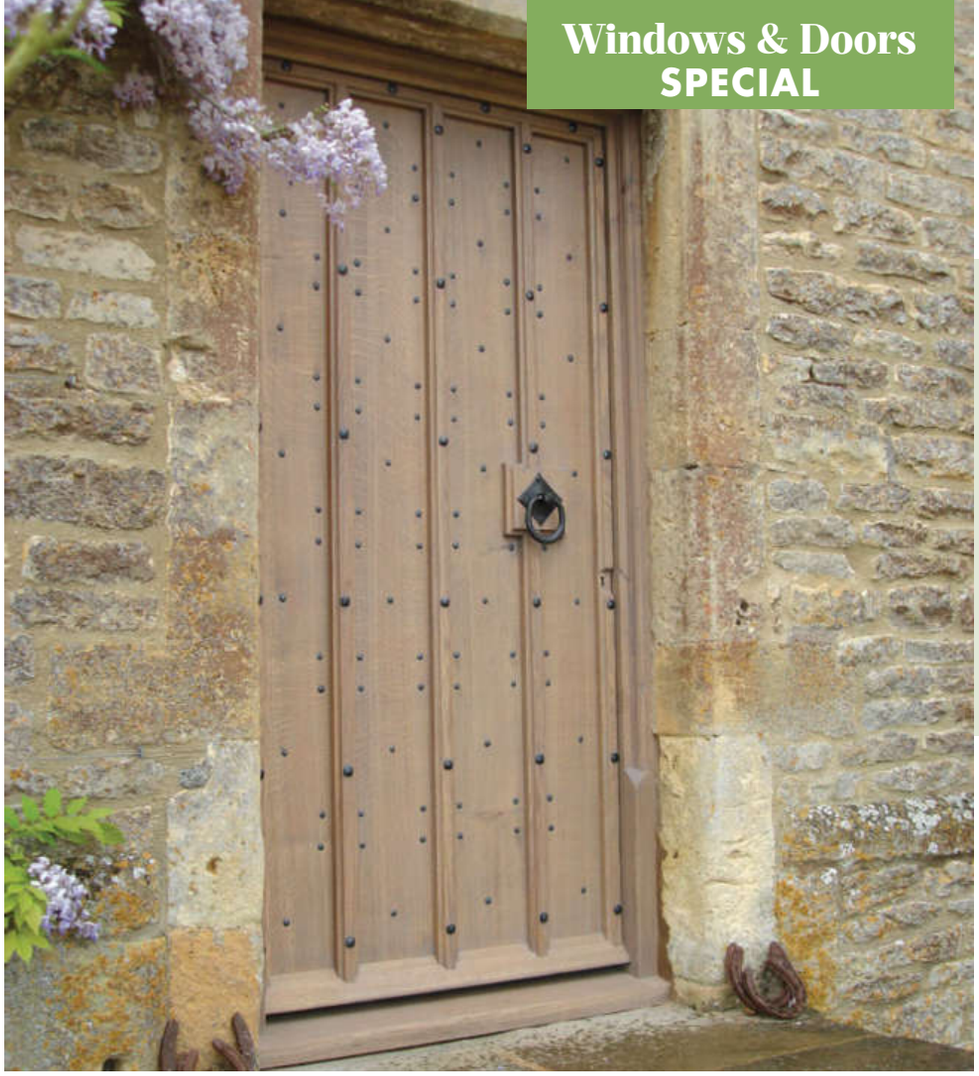

Test of time

Due to the style and age of my property, I require a bespoke joiner. What would you recommend?

Deacon & Sandys has been established for over 37 years, and specialise in the design, manufacture and installation of architectural joinery and furniture, based on the 15th–17th century English period. Our work is made and coloured to suit our customers' individual requirements and can be supplied and fitted in most countries.

Michael Sandys, Deadon & Sandys

01580 243 331, deaconandsandys.co.uk

Inside job

I'm looking to replace the locking device on my casement window. What would you recommend?

We specialise in traditional and contemporary ironmongery for your period home and our Shepherds Crook espagnolette window fastener is ideal for casement windows. Available in a stylish pewter patina finish, it can fit to any espagnolette window system or stand alone, and the handles are lockable via a grub screw hidden under the handle which lifts for access. They are handed with the crook scrolls to the left for left-handed and right for right-handed, and you can choose your option in the drop down menu when ordering. They come with matching pewter stays for a finished look.

Malcolm Booker, Period House Group

01427 871 467, phg-uk.com

Glass act

I want to update my sash windows, but I'm not sure which product to choose. Do you have any suggestions?

Our aluminium sash window is maintenance free, slim, strong and thermally efficient. The 36mm slim meeting rail gives you more glass area and less frame with both sashes tilting in, making them easy to clean and maintain. Its high specification double-glazed units and efficient thermal break reduce heat loss, making it an ideal option for period homes. As a family run business with over 55 years' experience, this is the slimmest and most authentic aluminium sash window in the UK.

Emma Phillips, Clearview Windows

01778 347 147, alumathermwindows.co.uk

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Dave Boxall, Met Therm Windows

01730 894 745, metthermwindows.co.uk

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DRESS *to* IMPRESS

Style up your home for winter with these window must-haves

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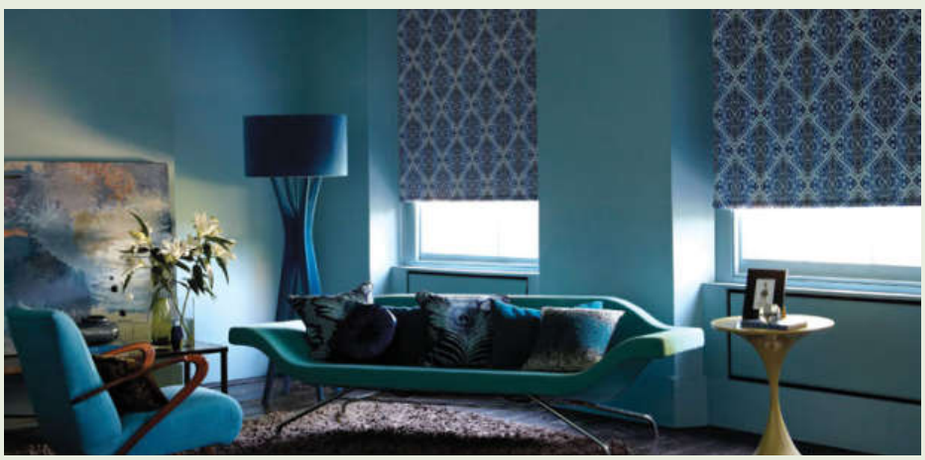
0845 094 4264, bellavistashutters.co.uk

SHUT EYE

Wooden Venetian blinds are naturally insulating and extremely effective at keeping the cold out in winter whilst shielding the sun to keep your interior cool throughout summer. With many styles and designs to choose from you can create the bespoke look you're after for all window spaces and recesses. Choose from full height, tier-on-tier, café swing style or a track system.
Call **0845 076 0109** or visit **santafeshutters.co.uk** to view the full spectrum of shutters.



BLIND SIDE

Shut out the coldest months of the year and celebrate being at home with luxuriously rich fabrics in these moody blue tones. These 'Sunara' roller blinds, with Aztec-inspired designs printed on a blackout satin base, will bring depth and texture to a room. Prices start from £90. For more statement window dressing ideas call **0844 811 8280** or visit **thefabricbox.co.uk**

PERSONAL TOUCH

Todd Knights designs and produces a stunning range of curtain poles and finials to add that finishing touch to your window surround. Created by Darren Knights, each finial is handmade by local and international designers to offer a variety of styles, from classic to contemporary. Pieces can be custom made to suit your scheme. Call **020 8766 6006** or visit **toddknights.com** to find out more.

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HANDLE *with* CARE

Make sure your door furniture is dazzling this season

As we invite friends and family into our older properties this year do make sure that every aspect of your home is welcoming, down to your door furniture. Caring for brass door furniture properly is a key part of this, so we asked our friend Jayne Elsbury at The Period Ironmonger for advice. "We really don't like lacquering brass and prefer to see door furniture build up a mature patina over its lifetime. But we do like clean hardware. Never use anything abrasive on your brass such as wire wool or a scouring pad; it will leave marks.

"The first thing you need to do is clean your brass with warm, soapy water and a soft nailbrush to remove the dirt and grime. Dry it off with a lint-free cloth and you'll see straight away what we mean about patina. The surface exposed to cleaning will be shiny whereas the crevasses will be slightly darker giving an aged appearance. Over time cleaning like this will give your hardware a mature, mellow appearance. There are various natural and household products that are quite effective when cleaning any stubborn stains and grime on brass.

YOU RANG M'LUD?
If you want to add a touch of Downton chic to your home, then our friends at theperiodironmonger.co.uk can help. All of their bell pulls and butler's bells are faithfully copied from Victorian and Edwardian originals. Each one is made out of solid brass and finished in polished nickel, polished brass or blackened brass.

LEMON AID

"Cut a lemon in half, remove the seeds and then sprinkle a little household salt on to a board and dip the cut side of the lemon into the salt. Then gently rub your brass surface with the cut face of the lemon (you may need to dip back into the salt occasionally), then wash or wipe with warm soapy water before wiping dry with a clean dry cloth. You could try using ketchup or Worcestershire sauce too. Use a clean, damp cloth, to gently cover the brass with the sauce and leave for about a minute, then use another clean cloth to wipe it off. Again wash the brass with warm soapy water and then dry with a soft clean cloth. This will give you a good result but it's not as effective as lemon and salt. If you'd rather buy a product off the shelf, then try a recognised metal polish such as Brasso and follow the manufacturer's instructions," says Jayne.

When your brass has been cleaned and is dry, Jayne recommends protecting it with a beeswax furniture polish spray. "Use just a light spray and wipe off any excess," she says. "This will leave a thin coat of beeswax on your brass and will extend the time between cleaning. Most modern brass hardware is lacquered to eliminate tarnishing, but in time the lacquer is prone to peeling and blistering. The life of the lacquer can also be affected by sea air, industrial pollution and high use. Regular cleaning with warm, soapy water and an occasional application of a good wax polish will help to protect it. When the lacquer does start to break down we recommend that you remove it with acetone or paint stripper and then care for it as unlacquered brass." Discover more at **theperiodironmonger.co.uk** or call Jayne and the team on **01630 647 748**.

JUST ADD WATER

Susan Dickerson goes behind the scenes at The Albion Bath Company

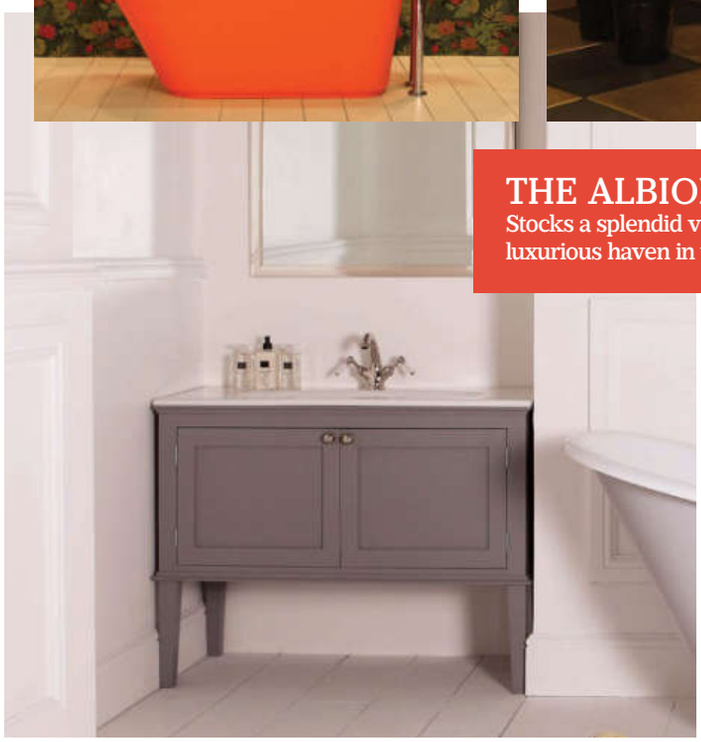
Choosing a new bathroom for a period house is an exciting experience and seeing products in the flesh is vital. You're sure to get plenty of inspiration at one of my favourite haunts, The Albion Bath Company. The founder, Phil Etherden, believes that good design is timeless and can be incorporated into various styles. Phil's passion for all things bathroom is infectious. "We have over 50 different baths to choose from and supply all over the world. I love designing and presenting new products, it's my favourite part of the business," he says.

"It's very fulfilling when someone enjoys a functional and beautiful item that you've taken through design, prototyping and manufacture. We're a close-knit team of 16 so we know each other (and our products) very well and take a lot of pride in our work. Building a business centred around making high quality, attractive products is a great feeling! I can't recommend it enough!"

MATERIAL WORLD

Phil is famous for developing a unique material in the bathroom world, which is called Iso Enamel. He wanted to combine the beauty of old-fashioned cast-iron baths with the latest

The Albion Bath Company has over 50 different baths to choose from and prides itself on fusing classic good looks with the latest technology



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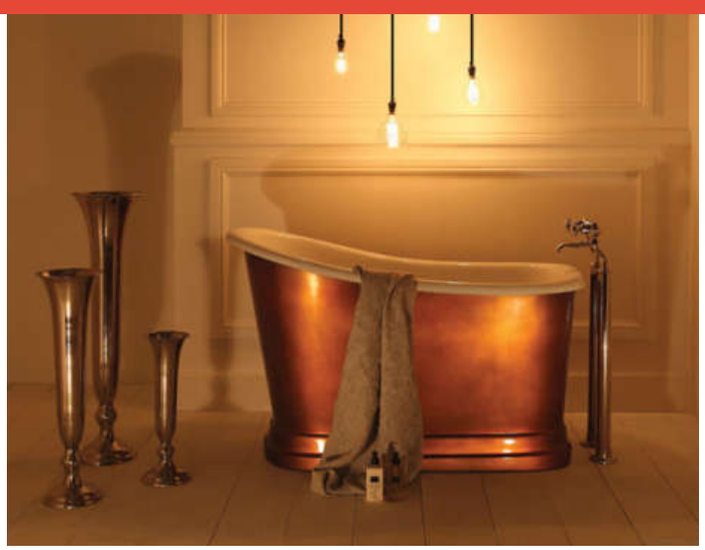

technology, so that customers could enjoy hot bath water for longer, without having to worry about extremely heavy tubs. Every Albion bath and shower tray is made of this strong and luxurious material that will give you years of bathing enjoyment as it insulates rather than losing heat.

The Albion factory is based in Weeley Heath in rural Essex, and the showroom boasts a superb assortment of brassware, heating and storage to cater for every bathroom large or small. You can bring a personal touch into your bathroom as the exterior of most Albion roll-top baths can be finished in a colour of your choice. You might be tempted by one of Dulux's trade paint colours, or you can go for a burnished finish in gold, iron or bronze.

METALLIC MAGIC

The latest additions are a polished pewter and aged copper effect – created by depositing metal particles directly on a highly-polished bath surface. These finishes are slightly mottled and highly reflective, resembling polished cast-iron. This process follows Albion's company principles of embracing technology to enhance traditional styles.

You can easily combine a free-standing bath with a functional power shower, thanks to the Effusio over-bath shower system. Enjoying the best of both worlds has never been easier. The Effusio can work with any size of bath from tiny to grand, and you'll be pleased to know that Albion even has a compact and deep roll-top, the Tubby Too, which is ideal for small bathrooms.

Choosing a beautiful basin is a joy with Albion's attentive and practical team. Be inspired by the simplicity of the new Dalby vanity consoles which can be customised to a format and colour of your choice.

You can stow your pampering products safely out of sight and ensure your bathroom looks streamlined and welcoming. The Hamar basin is available in three sizes – 1,050mm, 850mm and 750mm wide. Its gentle curves are perfectly combined with a classically styled vanity console, which will look superb in a period house.

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Timely tasks:

- Make sure your property is secure if you are going away over the holidays
- Stop the draught and keep the heat in. Check and seal gaps in windows, doors and old wooden floorboards
- Inspect roof for gaps and cracks to stop rain and snow

BUILDINGS AT RISK

The Victorian Society has announced its top ten most endangered Victorian and Edwardian buildings in England and Wales this year. The list includes Brighton's seafront walk, Madeira Terrace, said to be the longest continuous cast-iron structure in the world, Kinmel Hall, often dubbed the 'Welsh Versailles' (pictured) and London's gothic Ladywell Baths. Christopher Costelloe, director of the Victorian Society, says, "All the buildings included in this year's top ten are listed buildings meaning that the government has recognised their national importance. They all deserve better than their current situations. I urge the public to share the list to help raise awareness of these buildings and help them to find the investment they desperately need." To view the top ten, and to help save other historic properties, visit **victoriansociety.org.uk**

Get sorted

With harsh winter conditions causing leaks and damage to buildings, especially period homes, now is the time to make repairs. Bryan Williamson & Daughters work with period and listed properties, sympathetically restoring them to their former glory. With expert knowledge of building and construction methods, this family business and their skilled craftsmen and women are equipped to perform all manner of tasks, from entire property renovations to repairing individual traditional fixtures. **01342 834 829, bwilliamsonanddaughters.co.uk**

On **top** form

Staffordshire clay roof tile manufacturer Dreadnought Tiles, has added a new rustic tile to its range of roof tiles this winter. Dreadnought is well known for its plain clay tiles and traditional clay colour range, as well as ornamental tiles and bespoke fittings. The new "rustic" roof tile has a sanded finish which adds texture and character without the expense of a handmade tile. You can buy it in all natural clay colours from reds and browns through to brindles and blues, and it is ideal for renovations. **01384 77405, dreadnought-tiles.co.uk**

Special delivery

Did you know that large and heavy items can be transported without breaking the bank? Specialist couriers such as ParcelHero can ship original fittings at a lower cost than heavy hauliers, so do some research if you're buying or selling period features. ParcelHero's David Jinks says, "When an old building is being demolished or remodelled many wonderful items such as old beams, elaborate timber doors and ornate fireplaces are simply broken up because people don't realise how cheap it is to sell items and ship them using a specialist." ***0844 880 4558, parcelhero.com***

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

HOT STUFF

Our experts get to the heart of the heating matter this issue

Size matters

What size stove do I need to heat my living room?

As a rough guide, 1kW of heat will be sufficient for 14 cubic metres. For example: a room which measures 4.5m x 5m x 2.2m = 49.5 cubic metres. Then we divide 49.5 cubic metres by 14 = 3.5kW. So this particular room would need 3.5kW of heat to warm it, assuming there is no other heating and it is relatively draught free and well-insulated. Our stoves have been tested independently to EN 13240, the latest European standard. They scored an 82% efficiency rating, when burning wood. An efficiency rating measures how much of the wood's energy is converted into heat by the stove. An open fire is typically between 20-30% efficient so it requires three times as much fuel as a Chilli Penguin stove to release the same amount of heat into your room.

Karen Harris, Chilli Penguin Stoves

01758 721 247, chillipenguin.co.uk

Eco-warrior

I am looking for an eco-friendly stove, what do you recommend?

How about our new Farringdon stove? This sleek, contemporary stove has a lifetime guarantee, making it a great investment, and it already meets 2022 European Eco Design regulations. The stove has an 8kW output and is available in a choice of grey or anthracite to suit every decor. It burns wood only, meaning that you will be protecting the environment by burning a very sustainable source of fuel. The stove is compact and stylish, transforming any space with its clean-cut lines whilst boasting a large fire viewing glass and sleek detachable handle. You can even buy a matching log store and ash carrier to complete the look.

Laura Goldsbury, Arada

01297 35700, arada.uk.com

Wood idea

What do I need to look for when choosing a wood fuel supplier?

If you're keen to reduce your carbon footprint, then look for a supplier whose views chime with yours. Make sure that the supplier is accredited so that you know you're in good hands. All our wood fuel products are sustainably sourced from FSC approved forests and we are dedicated to operating our business in an environmentally sound way. We want to be recognised as one of the top solid fuel sellers in the UK so we have sought out and achieved every level of accreditation, every professional certification, and every trust mark and symbol of quality available in our field.

Stephen Talbot, Logs Direct

01524 812 476, logsdirect.co.uk

Change & adapt

How do I adapt my existing fireplace so it can house a wood-burning stove?

If you have a period home, you probably have a Class I chimney so you can consider a wood burning stove for your home. We recommend that your chimney is lined for extra protection and to enhance the stove's performance and efficiency. Your hearth and chamber opening might need to be modified, so you may have to change your fire surround unless this can be removed intact. Always go for a stove and fire surround combination if space allows. Visit your local fireplace showroom for advice. The team will carry out a survey and install your fireplace according to HETAS (Solid Fuel) regulations.

Eve Iravani, Montpellier Marble

01242 582 777, montpellier.co.uk

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Just my type

Does the type of chimney I have determine the fireplace I buy?

In a nutshell, yes. Older houses (those built pre-1960) generally have Class I chimneys which are larger and can accommodate most types of fireplaces. However, you must ensure the internal condition is checked as sometimes it can deteriorate and may have to be lined. Newer houses can contain a variety of chimney systems, or possibly none at all. In these circumstances you will need to check with a retailer to see which types of fireplaces and fuel can be used. Please also remember that installing a fireplace is both a complex and potentially dangerous task. We strongly advise that you only use accredited installers who have the necessary qualifications. All Capital Fireplace retailers will be able to advise you on all aspects of safe installation.

Andy Hitcham, Capital Fireplaces, 01462 813 138, capitalfireplaces.co.uk

Victorian vision

What sort of radiator would look best in my Victorian house?

Victorian interior design tended to be ornate and elaborate, but some houses had more understated fittings. When choosing a design for your radiator you will need to consider the overall look and feel of your house and find something that fits your style and which will also give you the output you need to heat your room. The design of our charming Ornate radiator (pictured above) dates from the late Victorian era. There are many original and attractive radiator designs to choose from and as an alternative, you could choose a column style radiator. These were produced commercially at the end of the Victorian era and work well in both traditional and contemporary schemes.

Diana Rabjohns, The Old Radiator Company

01233 850 082, theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk

Flaming fabulous

I'd like to have a gas fire in my extension but there's no chimney? What can I do?

All is not lost! It is perfectly possible to have a gas fire in your extension providing you have a suitable outside wall. May I suggest the Vitesse balanced flue fire which will give you an excellent heating performance? As the fire is completely sealed from the room there will be no draughts and the heating efficiency is 90% – verified by BSI. Air for combustion will be drawn in through an outer wall pipe and an inner pipe will remove the combustion gases to the outside of your property.

James Tagg, Nu-Flame

020 8254 6802, nu-flame.co.uk

Best buy

Why is it a good idea to choose a British stove?

As with most items manufactured in Britain, you'll find that your stove will be of a superior quality and meet all the required recommendations like our OER Range of stoves. Most British stoves boast a cast-iron door and a steel body. The steel heats up quickly and the cast-iron retains the heat providing maximum heat output at all times. Our beautiful stoves are made by a company that has manufactured stove appliances for over 180 years and are all approved for use in smoke control areas. Look out for bespoke enamel colours, a large viewing window and excellent technology which exceeds the new clean burn regulations for 2017.

Megan Alcock, Oer Fireplaces, 01782 319 350, oerfireplaces.com

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Log–Delivery.co.uk delivers kiln-dried logs, British kindling and seasoned logs straight to your doorstep. The hassle-free service is ideal for owners of wood-burning stoves and fireplaces who lead busy lives. Log-Delivery.co.uk covers the whole of London and Surrey and guarantees delivery within three hours, seven days a week.

For small stoves, 200mm kiln-dried logs are available. The larger 250mm logs, meanwhile, come handily packed in crates and 10kg nets for easy handling.

Owner Barney Dorman says, "The environment is important to us. Our kindling and seasoned logs are sourced from the Guildford area and we're proud to be supporting a number of local, rural businesses.

"We're actively working with woodland owners to bring British woodland back into active management by purchasing from the Surrey Hills area."

info@log-delivery.co.uk
020 8819 6482

Burning up

We discover the inspiration behind The Radiator Factory's beautiful designs

When it comes to updating the features of a period home, retaining a timeless and traditional feel is vital, but it's equally important that any practical elements support a modern lifestyle and its demands. Striking the balance between function and fashion can be tricky to get right in any property, but thanks to The Radiator Factory, it's easy to do.

With over 25 years of experience, the company offers over 3,000 bespoke sizes of column radiators, perfect for fitting into unusual areas and awkward spaces in your home. Its portfolio includes a wealth of beautiful, energy efficient and high output designer radiators, which perform at an optimum level at all times, so you can rest assured in your radiator's heating function. Plus, with this vast collection, you can reap the benefits of 21st century heating engineering without compromising your home's period identity. The stunning models showcase a variety of authentic and original styles, while providing your home with warmth, security and cutting-edge design.

UNIVERSAL STYLE

If you want your radiator to make a statement, the designs at The Radiator Factory will do just that. They are unusually inspired by stunning structural landmarks and are cast in Europe, but finished, tested and built in the company workshop in Leicestershire. The Chatsworth, for instance, boasts a simple Edwardian style, influenced by the grand Chatsworth country house in Derbyshire. Its classic architecture is mirrored in the elegant finish of the radiator, which is available in five heights and two depths, as well as four and six column options. Or, if you're a fan of ornate French form, the Belvoir is an ideal choice. Named after the Belvoir castle, the luxury Leicestershire country home, this radiator features a delicate design and comes in three heights and two column depths. With inspiration from real architecture, the authentic style of each model is guaranteed. You can also choose from the company's vast range of old English shades and metallic colours, allowing you to create a radiator to perfectly suit your scheme.

PERFECT FIT

The Radiator Factory also creates radiators to fit bay windows, as many period homes include this traditional feature. Bay windows bring heaps of character to a room, but their unusual shape makes furnishing options limited. The company remedies this with a vast range of angled radiators made to fit your room's exact measurements, including the Round Top Curved model, which is ideal for circular bays. As the name suggests, it boasts a slim rounded top, which will complement the cove beneath any bay window, and comes in a semi-gloss white, creating a sleek and subtle look. The Cru Curved option is a classical alternative with clean, defined lines and a column design. Available in a variety of heights and widths as well as a range of colours, you can also opt for welded feet to enhance its visual appeal.

The Radiator Factory's impressive array of designs and styles is available to view at its showroom in Leicestershire, where you'll also discover a wealth of accessories to choose from to complete your heating package.

Turn up the HEAT

To find out more about these stunning radiators and the variety of designs and sizes available, call **01162609257** or visit **radiatorfactory.net** to view the brochure online.

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Explore a world of colour and texture at Oriental Rugs of Bath. **01761 451 764, orientalrugsofbath.com**

3 OF THE BEST... WOOD FINISHES

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Ronseal Diamond Hard Floor Varnish, priced around £12 for a 1 litre tin, ***0114 240 9469, ronseal.co.uk***

Floors to ADORE

Discover the latest flooring trends for older homes with Period Ideas

The reason we love period properties as much as we do lies in their distinctive character. Flooring plays a big part in the overall appeal of a house, especially if we are looking for a new home. Natural materials look great with older houses so whether you're tempted by wool rugs and carpets, timber or stone, you simply can't go wrong.

"Wooden flooring is the perfect feature piece, and looks great naturally, without any tints or varnishes," says Steve Grimwood, of Osmo. "Transparent finishes have become a popular solution to maintain timber's good looks. They will enhance the appearance of the grain, and make flooring more durable, resistant to dirt, stains and moisture. I recommend our Polyx oil as it is full of natural ingredients, and penetrates the wood deeply, without forming a film on the surface. This ensures that the wood retains its breathability and elasticity, so your floor can respond to changes in temperature with the changing seasons."

Reclaimed flooring is always worth exploring when you are working on a renovation project and want to bring back a feeling of character. Make sure you approach an expert to get the best quality of timber and benefit from their years of experience with your project.

Sara Cox of Parquet Parquet shares her top tips to ensure you get exactly what you want. "Don't be bullied by your builder into buying new if you don't want to. Often your builders may try to put you off as it makes their lives easier not yours. Stay true to your ideals of re-using a quality material. Make sure you talk to a floor-fitter with experience of fitting reclaimed floors; it isn't scientific but it helps if you use someone who isn't afraid of re-using old parquet. Plan ahead. Try to inform yourself and buy from suppliers who know their subject well and offer a good customer service – it pays if you have any problems, but usually if the customer service is good, you won't have issues." (01507 313 470, parquet-parquet.co.uk)

Once you've found the right solid surface, you can make it even more personal with a soft floor covering. The right carpet can feel positively heavenly underfoot and real wool carpets are excellent at resisting dirt and grime and will last for years. Another option is to choose rugs which will look great over floorboards or natural stone surfaces.

Make sure that they are in the right proportion with your room. Afghan rugs look fantastic in halls and dining rooms, and you'll find that they can work just as well in minimalist schemes as in homes with low beams and leaded glass. We recommend a visit to Oriental Rugs of Bath so you can enjoy browsing a wealth of glorious rugs.

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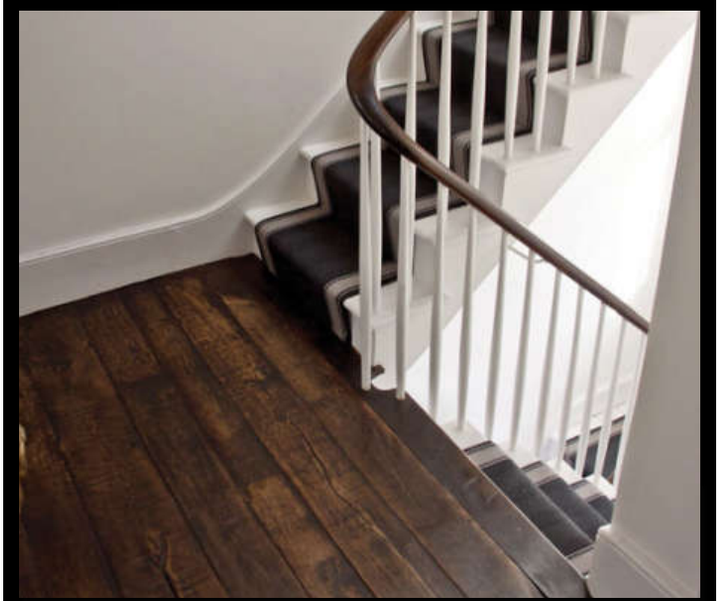

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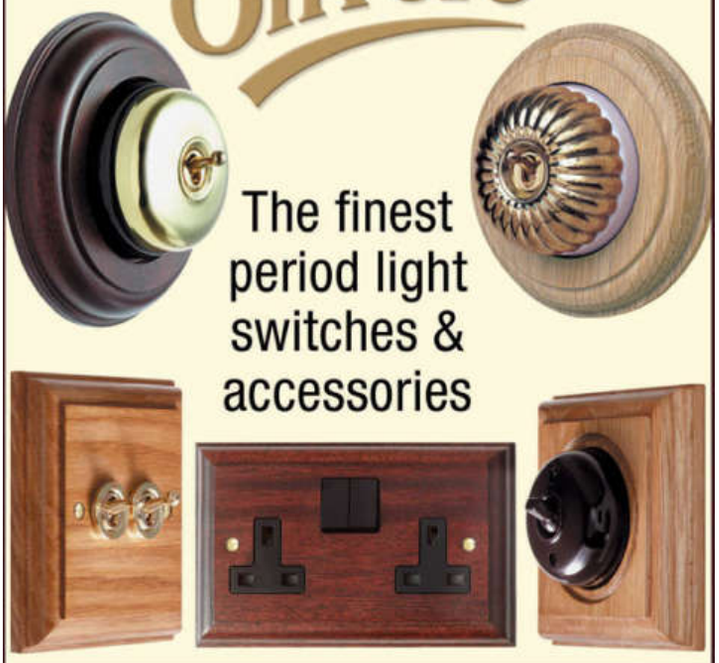

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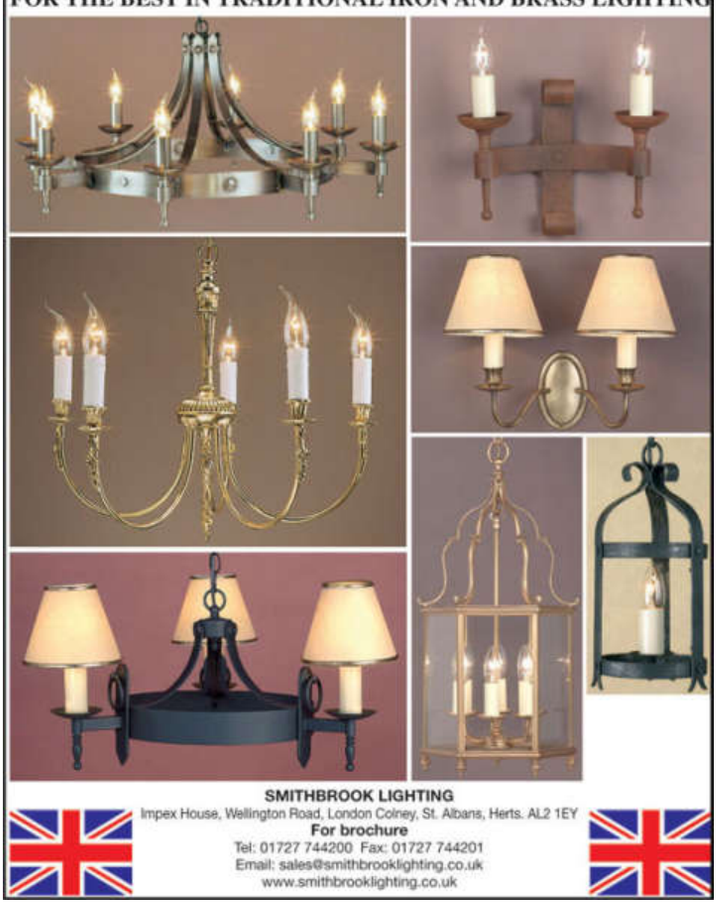

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Twin Titanic pendant, priced around £744, The Limehouse Lamp Co., **01273 497 070, limehouse1900.com, limehouselighting.com**

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HOME HIGHLIGHTS FOR DECEMBER

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Make the most of your abode with our selection of products, ideas and expert advice

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Poinsettia berry and ivy wreath, £10, Tesco Direct. ***0800 323 4050, tesco.com/direct***

Christmas door wreath, £25.90, DaWanda. ***en.dawanda.com***

HOME REFRESH

With a variety of unique wall coverings, Opus Muras combines the finest materials with an array of rich colours. You can transform any space with its exciting designs and original themes.
07852 497 461, opusmuras.com

PICK & CHOOSE

The Real Wood Furniture Company makes unique chairs and furniture using English oak, burr oak, ash and elm. Bespoke pieces can be made to order, while showroom pieces can be bought at its Woodstock base. Visitors can enjoy the ambience of three interlinked period properties, with no pressure to buy. ***01993 813 887, rwfco.com***

WARM UP

English Fireplaces offers a wide range of beautiful hand-carved marble, limestone and sandstone pieces. Its friendly team can guide you through choosing, installing and using a fireplace, and there's a wealth of styles available. **01730 887 109, englishfireplaces.co.uk**

SITTING PRETTY

The Chair People manufacture bespoke designer seating. These two pieces are from Abraham Moon & Sons' Dales collection, inspired by the Yorkshire Dales, with a 100% wool finish. ***01952 585 820, thechairpeople.co.uk***

BURNING BRIGHT

Stone and Fire has been making standard and bespoke fireplaces in Emsworth Hampshire since 1934. Its fantastic products can be purchased through Stone and Fire stockists nationwide. ***01243 373 431, stoneandfire.co.uk***

FANCY FABRIC

Embroidered crewel fabrics from Coromandel Crafts are handmade and come in a range of colours or natural tones based on Elizabethan and Jacobean designs. Period Ideas readers can save 10% on all orders by quoting Period Ideas Offer by 15th December 2015. **0118 979 6222, coromandel.co.uk**

HEAD OUTSIDE

Thanks to HSP Garden Buildings, you can make the most of your outdoor space, even in winter. It designs, manufactures and installs a variety of structures to suit any garden, and is committed to creating the perfect garden building for you. **01638 583 814, hspgardenbuilding.com**

MAKING HISTORY

Dedicated to the reproduction and restoration of Adam fireplaces, the craftsmen at Thistle & Rose are world famous. The firm also restore furniture of all kinds and make bespoke pieces to order at its workshop on the Scottish boarder. **01450 376 928, thistleandrose.co.uk**

PICTURE PERFECT

The Country Stile has a wide selection of framed prints and canvases, such as *Slipper* and *Walkies*, both pictured here, costing £60 each. This family-run company guarantees a personal and efficient service, and now offers free delivery on all orders over £50. **01507 525 871, thecountrystile.co.uk**

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Send your entry form to: Period Ideas December Competitions, PO Box 443, Ipswich, Suffolk IP2 8WG

Competitions and giveaways are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated companies and their families. One entry per person. The prizes detailed in each competition/giveaway cannot be exchanged for goods, or towards the purchase of goods at any retail outlet. Postal entries must be on the coupon provided. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash, or replaced if lost or damaged. Illegible entries and those that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. CLOSING DATE: 11th December 2015. Winners will be notified by phone, post or email. A list of winners will be available in writing on request from: Marketing Department, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY

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January issue

The next issue of Period Ideas is on sale from 27th November

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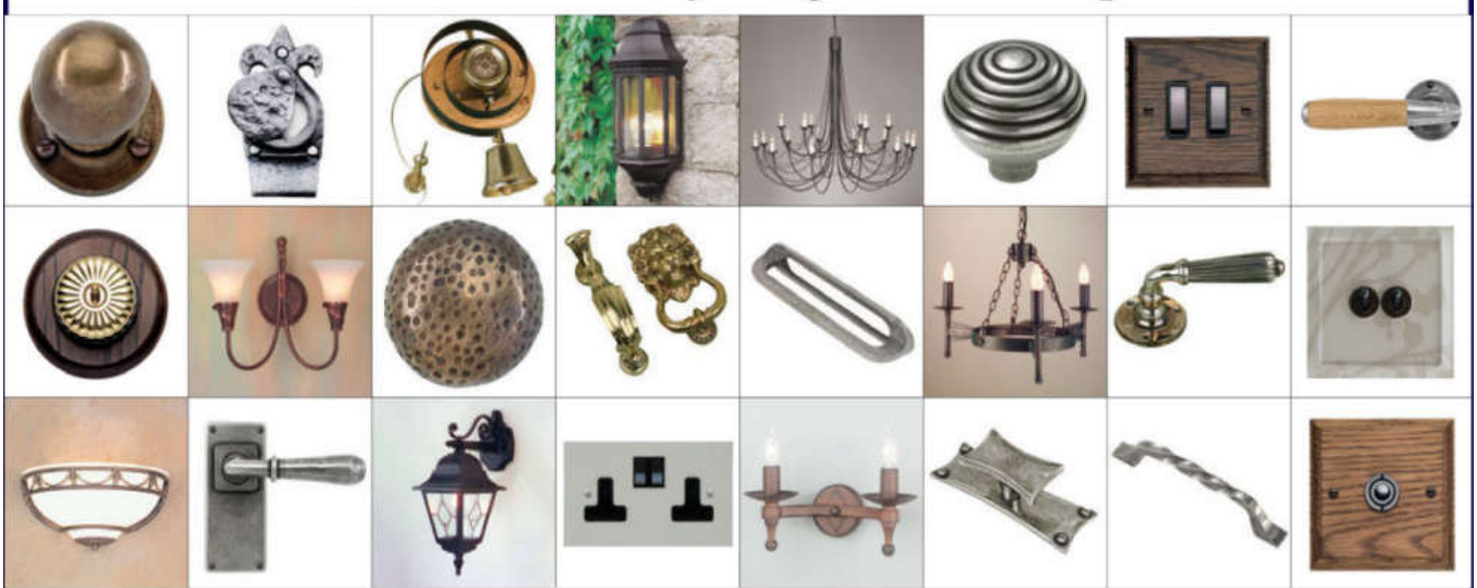

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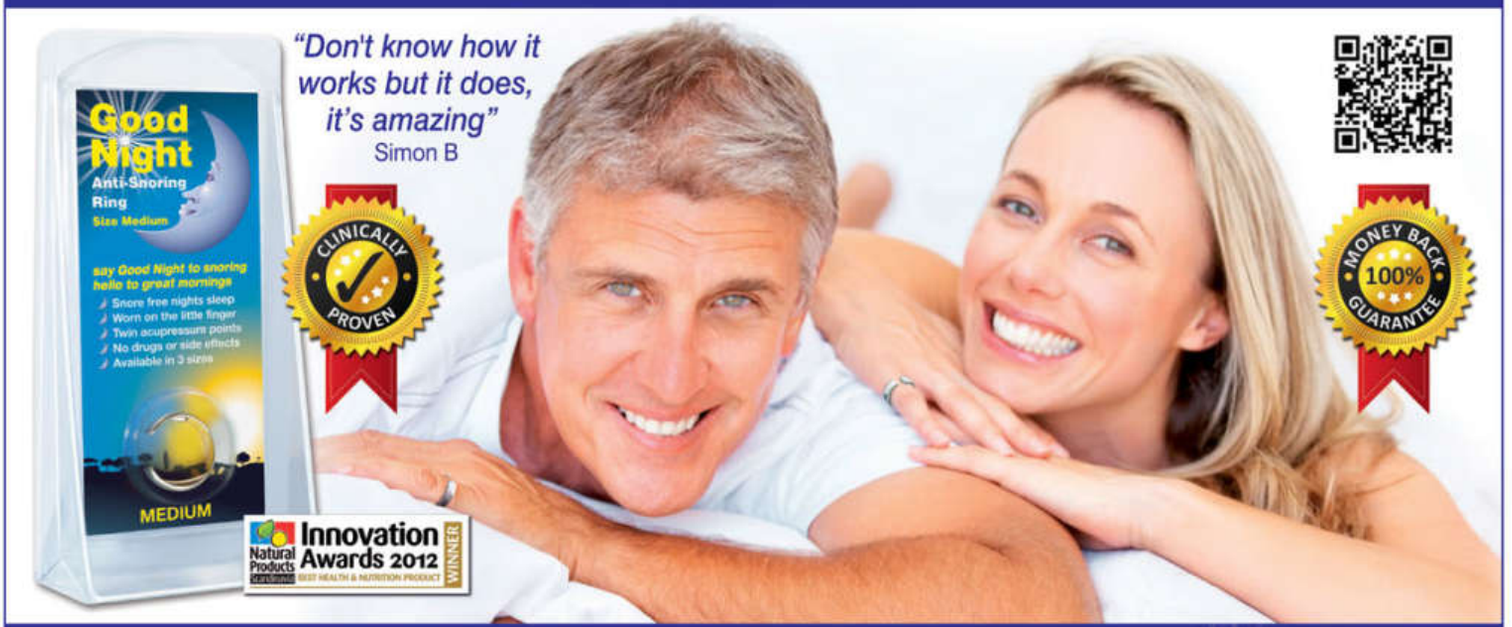

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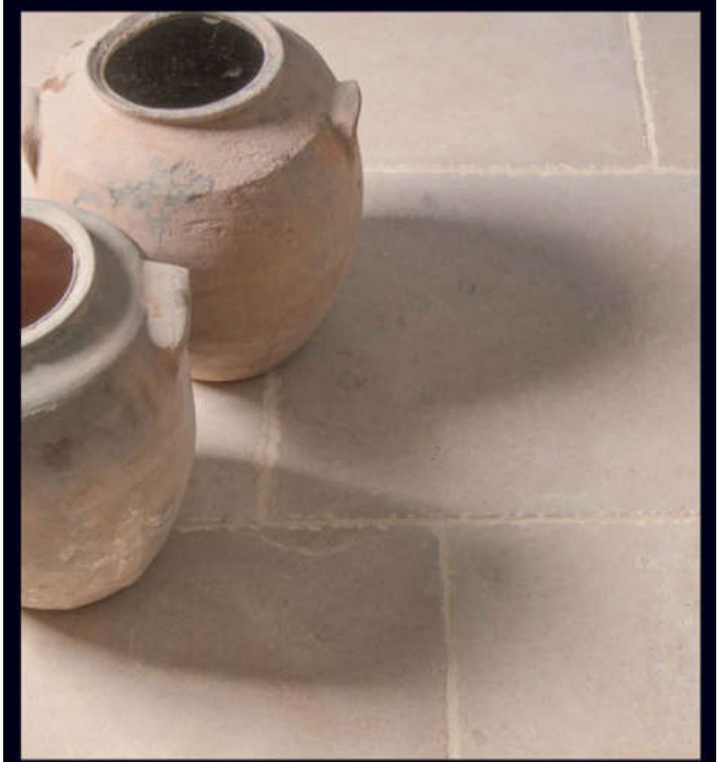

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LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

Our property expert advises how we can keep the heat in and make our old houses eco-friendly

Edited by **JESSICA PANTON**

With heating bills going up, and a desire to do my bit to support the planet, I think a lot more can and should be done in older homes to make them more eco-friendly.

Having owned old houses for many years, one thing I am always conscious of is the cold, condensation and damp that often comes with them, especially during the winter.

I think the character of period properties outweighs the problems, and a good set of thermals and a fully qualified RICs surveyor (who is a specialist in damp) have always got me by! I have been lucky that every time I have moved home there has been good government support for things like loft insulation. One poor guy insulated the roofs in my current home for just £80 on a summer's day when it was 30 degrees outside. I felt for him as he was working on a four-bedroomed farmhouse and converted barn.

I wish I'd made sure our external walls, such as the ones in our en-suite, were insulated before tiling. As I have a stone property, there's no cavity walls for us. The ens-suite gets very cold and the radiator tends to struggle to keep it warm. It's the same for the bathroom and my office, so when I come to re-decorate this is on my list of to-dos.

With heating bills inevitably going up, and a desire to make sure I do my bit to support the planet, I think that a lot more can, and should, be done to help make houses more eco-friendly. Its worth noting that anyone letting an old property that isn't listed will need to make sure the Energy Performance Certificate has a rating of 'E' or above to legally let it from 2018.

It's vital to take professional advice on what would work for you, your family, or your tenants and your property. I hear many stories of people that have insulated their home based on all the recommendations, only to end up with huge condensation problems.

I've seen beautiful old homes with sagging roofs thanks to a rather enthusiastic solar panel sales person. Roofs can become unstable as the panels are so heavy. They often look horrible and can cause serious damage if a surveyor hasn't checked the load that the roof can manage. So before you call in any eco sales people, check independent sources such as the Energy Savings Trust website, and then if you can, visit somewhere like the National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon for expert one-to-one advice, all of which is independent and mostly free of charge.

But it's not just about saving heat. There is lots to be done to save water. This can easily be done through good guttering and linking into water butts so you can use 'recycled rain' to water plants. Water is a precious resource so anything you can do such as replacing loos with eco-friendly flushes and reducing your usage, will be a bonus. Do investigate water meters. We have saved a fortune moving to a pay-as-you-go system, but we don't have kids and we are away a lot, so make sure you do research before switching! It's not so easy to change back.

And finally, a question I get asked regularly is will investment in an eco-friendly home add value? The jury so far is still out on this, so my view would be don't do it to add value but build it in when you are carrying out works or make sure that anything you buy has a reasonable payback period.

KATE FAULKNER katefaulkner.co.uk

For more help on creating an eco-friendly home visit propertychecklists.co.uk. Kate is one of the UK's leading residential property experts. She writes *Which?* Property books and regularly appears on the BBC and ITV news as well as Radio 4 and 5live.

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